This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

UC-NRLF
B 4 593 525

Digitized by Google

GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison

918
J687
v. 3

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WORKS

OF THE BRITISH POETS.

FROM CHAUCER TO [illegible]

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

EDITED BY

ROBERT [illegible]

COLLEGE

[illegible] KEATS [illegible]

[illegible]

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
[illegible] BROADWAY.
1[illegible]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WORKS

OF

THE BRITISH POETS,

FROM CHAUCER TO MORRIS,

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

EDITED BY

ROSSITER JOHNSON.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.—KEATS TO MORRIS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH FINE STEEL ENGRAVINGS.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
549 AND 551 BROADWAY.
1876.

Digitized by Google

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1876, by
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

GIFT OF
A. F. Morrison
MINNOTIAS

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE

JOHN KEATS 1
Lamia 2
Isabella, or the Pot of Basil 8
The Eve of St. Agnes 13
Hyperion 17
To Some Ladies, on receiving a Curious Shell. 24
Imitation of Spenser 24
Ode to a Nightingale 24
Ode on a Grecian Urn 25
Ode to Psyche 26
Fancy 26
Ode 27
Robin Hood 27
To Autumn 28
Ode on Melancholy 28

HARTLEY COLERIDGE 29
To a Friend 29
Song 29
She is not Fair to Outward View 29
Shakespeare 29

SAMUEL LOVER 30
Rory O'More 30
Oh! watch You well by Daylight 31
The Angel's Whisper 31
The Blarney 31
St. Kevin 31
Paddy Blake's Echo 32
The War-Ship of Peace 32
The Indian Summer 32
Molly Carew 33
The Happiest Time is Now 33
The Silent Farewell 34
What will You do, Love? 34
Paddy's Pastoral Rhapsody 34
The Low-Backed Car 34
Widow Machree 35
Father-Land and Mother-Tongue 35
The Birth of St. Patrick 36
Molly Bawn 36
'T is Sweet to Remember 36
The Jaunting Car 36

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL 37
Jeanie Morrison 37
My Heid is like to rend, Willie 38
Wearie's Well 39
The Bloom hath fled thy Cheek, Mary 39
Wae be to the Orders 39
The Battle-Flag of Sigard 40
The Sword-Chant of Thorstein Randi 42
The Cavalier's Song 43
The Covenanter's Battle-Chant 43
They come! the Merry Summer Months 43
A Solemn Conceit 44
A Monody 44
When I beneath the Cold, Red Earth am sleeping 45

THOMAS HAINES BAYLY 46
The First Gray Hair 46
The Weary Watcher 47
The Forsaken to the False One 47
The Pilot 47
Isle of Beauty, fare thee well 48
I'd be a Butterfly 48
The Soldier's Tear 48
Long, Long Ago 48
Oh no! We never mention Her 49
Welcome me Home 49
I'm Saddest when I sing 49

PAGE

The Rose that all are praising 49
The Desert Isle 49
Of what is the Old Man thinking? 59
Sing me a Melody 50
She wore a Wreath of Roses 50
Oh! for a Mother's Eye 50
We met 51
Deck not with Gems 51
Why don't the Men propose? 51

DAVID MACBETH MOIR 52
Casa Wappy 52
Time's Changes 53
Langsyne 54
The Absent Lover 54
Farewell, our Father's Land 55
Mary Dhu 55

THOMAS HOOD 56
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg 56
The Haunted House 77
A Fairy Tale 80
A Nocturnal Sketch 81
Number One 82
Epicurean Reminiscences of a Sentimentalist.. 82
Pain in a Pleasure-Boat 83
November 84
Faithless Sally Brown 84
Faithless Nelly Gray 85
The Bachelor's Dream 86
A Plain Direction 86
The Song of the Shirt 87
The Bridge of Sighs 88
The Exile 89
The Water-Lady 89
To a Cold Beauty 90
Ruth 90
Ballad 90
I remember, I remember 90
Ode 90
Ballad 91
A Retrospective Review 92
Eugene Aram's Dream 92
The Death-Bed 94

ROBERT POLLOK 95
The Course of Time:
Book I 95
Book II 99
Book III 105
Book IV 115
Book V 121
Book VI 131
Book VII 137
Book VIII 143
Book IX 151
Book X 161

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY 167
The Convict Ship 167
To a Girl weeping 167
Flower of my Cold and Darkened Year 168
Mount Carmel 168
A Farewell 169
The Quiet Land 169
Cleopatra 169
She sleeps that Still and Placid Sleep 170
Cleopatra at Actium 170
Epitaph 171
Nay, dry that Tear 171

M94402

Digitized by Google

PAGE

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY 172
Lays of Ancient Rome:
Horatius 172
The Battle of Lake Regillus 177
Virginia 183
The Prophecy of Capys 187
Ivry 189
Naseby 191
Moncontour.—A Song of the Huguenots 191
My Lady 192

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED 193
Lillian 193
The Vicar 197
The Belle of the Ball 198
Our Ball 199
Twenty-Eight and Twenty-Nine 199
To ——— 200
Where is Miss Myrtle? 200
Childhood and his Visitors 201
I remember 201
Lyrical Charades 202

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON 205
The Awakening of Endymion 205
Night at Sea 206
Little Red Riding Hood 207
The Shepherd Boy 208
When should Lovers breathe their Vows? 208
The Lily of the Valley 208
Can you forget Me? 209
Disenchantment 209
The Woodland Brook 210
Last Verses of L. E. L. 210

CHARLES SWAIN 211
Dryburgh Abbey 211
The Three Callers 212
A Violet in her Hair 212
Smile, and never heed Me 213
I waited till the Twilight 213
The Old Cottage Clock 213
Life 213

GERALD GRIFFIN 214
Vanitas Vanitatum 214
The Mie-na-Mallah now is past 214
Old Times! Old Times! 215
A Place in thy Memory, Dearest 215
Gilli-Ma-Chree 215
The Phantom City 216
My Spirit is of Pensive Mould 216
They speak of Scotland's Heroes Old 216
'T is, it is the Shannon's Stream 217
Time and Eternity 217
You never bade Me hope 217

WILLIAM and MARY HOWITT 218
A June Day 218
The Departure of the Swallow 218
Summer Woods 218
Little Children 219
The Use of Flowers 219
The Fairies of the Caldon Low 220

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING 221
Sonnets from the Portuguese 222
Lady Geraldine's Courtship 228
Rhyme of the Duchess May 234
Bertha in the Lane 240
Catarina to Camoens 242
De Profundis 243
Mother and Poet 244
Only a Curl 245
A Child's Grave at Florence 246
The Dead Pan 247
Cowper's Grave 249
Felicia Hemans 250
L. E. L.'s Last Question 251
The Sleep 251
The Cry of the Children 252
A Musical Instrument 253
Confessions 254
The Lady's Yes 255
To Bettine 255
The Romance of the Swan's Nest 256

JOHN STERLING 257
The Spice-Tree 257
The Rose and the Gauntlet 258
To a Child 258
Shakespeare 258
The Two Oceans 259
On a Beautiful Day 259
The Husbandman 259

PAGE

CAROLINE NORTON 260
Bingen on the Rhine 260
The King of Denmark's Ride 261
Love not 261
The Dream 262
The Creole Girl 274
I cannot love Thee 277
The Picture of Sappho 279
The Poet's Choice 280
The Hunting-Horn of Charlemagne 280
To Ferdinand Seymour 281
The Mother's Heart 281
The Blind Man's Bride 282
The Fallen Leaves 283
The Arab to his Favorite Steed 283
We have been Friends together 284
Allan Percy 284

JAMES BALLANTINE 285
Naebody's Bairn 285
Castles in the Air 285
Ilka Blade o' Grass keps its ain Drap o' Dew 285
Wifie, come Hame 286
The Birdie sure to sing 286
Creep afore ye gang 286
The Nameless Lassie 286
Bonnie Bonaly 287
Saft is the Blink o' thine Ee, Lassie 287
The mair that ye work 287
Ae Gude Turn deserves anither 287

HORATIUS BONAR 288
A Little While 288
Is this All? 288
The Meeting-Place 289
Bright Feet of May 289
All Well 289

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES 290
The Long-Ago 290
The Beating of my Heart 291
When long upon the Scales of Fate 291
Youth, that pursuest 291
London Churches 291

ALFRED TENNYSON 292
Mariana 293
The Deserted House 293
A Dirge 293
The Ballad of Oriana 294
The Lady of Shalott 295
Mariana in the South 296
The Miller's Daughter 297
Œnone 299
Lady Clara Vere de Vere 301
The May Queen 302
The Lotos-Eaters 304
Choric Song 305
A Dream of Fair Women 306
The Death of the Old Year 309
You ask Me why 309
Morte d'Arthur 310
St. Simeon Stylites 312
The Talking Oak 314
The Golden Year 317
Ulysses 317
The Eagle 318
Locksley Hall 318
Godiva 321
The Two Voices 322
The Day-Dream 327
St. Agnes 329
Edward Gray 330
To ——— 330
The Lord of Burleigh 330
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere 331
A Farewell 332
The Vision of Sin 332
Songs from "The Princess" 334
In Memoriam 335
Maud 363
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington 375
Will 377
The Charge of the Light Brigade 378
Idyls of the King:
Dedication 378
Enid 379
Elaine 394
Guinevere 406
The Grandmother 412
Northern Farmer—Old Style 413
Tithonus 415
The Voyage 415
The Sailor-Boy 416

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Northern Farmer—New Style ... 416
Come not, when I am Dead ... 417
Break, break, break ... 417

WILLIAM BARNES ... 418
In the Dorset Dialect:
Blackmwore Maidens ... 418
Day's Work a-done ... 418
The Motherless Child ... 419
Faetherhood ... 419
Meary wedded ... 419
The Stwonen Bwoy upon the Pillar ... 420
The Slanten Light o' Fall ... 420
In common English:
Autumn ... 421
The Child lost ... 421
Not Far to go ... 421
Changes ... 421
The Stonen Steps ... 422
At the Door ... 423
The Old Clock ... 422
When we that have Children were Children ... 423

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY ... 423
The White Squall ... 423
Peg of Limavaddy ... 423
The Mahogany Tree ... 426
Lucy's Birthday ... 426
The Cane-Bottomed Chair ... 427
Ronsard to his Mistress ... 427
At the Church Gate ... 428
The Age of Wisdom ... 428
Fairy Days ... 428
The Garret ... 429
When Moonlike Ore the Hazure Seas ... 429
King Canute ... 429
Mr. Molony's Account of the Ball ... 431
Ballads of Policeman X.:
The Wofle New Ballad of Jane Roney and Mary Brown ... 431
The Three Christmas Waits ... 432
Little Billee ... 434
Vanitas Vanitatum ... 434
The End of the Play ... 435
To Mary ... 435

ROBERT BROWNING ... 436
How they brought the Good News ... 436
Evelyn Hope ... 437
My Last Duchess ... 437
Count Gismond ... 438
The Confessional ... 439
The Glove ... 440
Any Wife to any Husband ... 442
A Light Woman ... 443
The Statue and the Bust ... 443
Andrea del Sarto ... 446
Saul ... 448
One Word more. To E. B. B. ... 453
Rabbi Ben Ezra ... 455
Confessions ... 457
May and Death ... 457
Prospice ... 457
Youth and Art ... 457
Apparent Failure ... 458
The Pied Piper of Hamelin ... 459
Incident of the French Camp ... 461
Misconceptions ... 461
One Way of Love ... 462
Time's Revenges ... 462
Meeting at Night ... 462
Parting at Morning ... 462

CHARLES MACKAY ... 463
The Inquiry ... 463
What might be done ... 463
Louise on the Door-Step ... 464
The Death-Song of the Poet ... 464
The Lost Day ... 464
Piety ... 465
Tubal Cain ... 465
The Rim of the Bowl ... 466
Sisyphus ... 466
Far, far upon the Sea ... 467
I love my Love ... 467
I lay in Sorrow, deep distressed ... 467

WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN ... 468
Edinburgh after Flodden ... 468
The Execution of Montrose ... 471
The Heart of the Bruce ... 473
The Burial-March of Dundee ... 475
The Refusal of Charon ... 476

PAGE
THOMAS DAVIS ... 477
Fontenoy ... 477
Lament for Owen Roe O'Neill ... 478
The Flower of Finae ... 478
The Sack of Baltimore ... 479
The Welcome ... 480
Maire Bhan Astor ... 480
The Bride of Mallow ... 481
The Banks of the Lee ... 481
Emmeline Talbot ... 481
Nationality ... 482
Sweet and Sad ... 483
The Right Road ... 483

AUBREY DE VERE ... 484
The Year of Sorrow—Ireland, 1849 ... 484
Stanzas ... 486
Sad Music ... 486
Lines ... 486
Appearances ... 486
Death ... 487
Her Shadow ... 487
Sonnets ... 487

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER ... 488
The Eternity of God ... 488
The God of my Childhood ... 489
Christmas-Night ... 489
The Three Kings ... 489
Longing for God ... 490
The Thought of God ... 491
Come to Jesus ... 491
The Gifts of God ... 492
Distractions in Prayer ... 492
The Old Laborer ... 493
Autumn ... 493
Deep Grief ... 494
A Child's Death ... 494
The Land beyond the Sea ... 495

SAMUEL FERGUSON ... 496
The Forging of the Anchor ... 496
The Fairy Thorn ... 497
The Pretty Girl of Loch Dan ... 498
Timoleague ... 499
Boatman's Hymn ... 499
Lament for the Sons of Usnach ... 500
Drimin Dhu ... 500

ELIZA COOK ... 501
The Old Arm-Chair ... 501
Hang up this Harp ... 501
The Englishman ... 501
There 's a Star in the West ... 502
It is the Song my Mother sings ... 502
Wedding-Bells ... 502

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH ... 503
Mari Magno: or Tales on Board ... 503
The Lawyer's Tale ... 504
My Tale ... 506
The Conducteur's Song ... 507
The Clergyman's Tale ... 509
Come back again ... 511
My Wind is turned to Bitter North ... 512
Higher Things ... 512
God will be there ... 512
Qua Cursum Ventus ... 513
There is no God ... 513
Peschiera ... 513
Where lies the Land? ... 514
Venit Hesperus ... 514
Faith ... 514

CHARLES KINGSLEY ... 515
Andromeda ... 515
The Sands of Dee ... 522
The Three Fishers ... 523
The Oubit ... 523
The Starlings ... 523
A Farewell ... 523
A Lament ... 523
Margaret to Dolcino ... 523
Dolcino to Margaret ... 523
The Last Buccanier ... 524
The World's Age ... 524
Alton Locke's Song ... 524
Songs from "The Water Babies" ... 525
The Knight's Leap ... 525
September 21, 1875 ... 525
The Mango-Tree ... 525
My Hunting Song ... 526
The Day of the Lord ... 526
Airly Beacon ... 526

Digitized by Google

PAGE

MATTHEW ARNOLD 527
Sohrab and Rustum 527
Philomela 535
Excuse 535
Indifference 535
Calais Sands 535
Dover Beach 536
The Terrace at Berne 536

SYDNEY DOBELL 537
How 's my Boy? 537
Home, wounded 537
A Nuptial Eve 539
Tommy 's Dead 539
Desolate 540
Farewell 541
The Milkmaid's Song 542
The German Legion 543
The Young Man's Song 543
The Widow's Lullaby 544
An Evening Dream 545
A Psalm of the Heart 547
Afloat and Ashore 549
"She touches a Sad String of Soft Recall" 549
America 550
Good-Night in War-Time 550
Isabel 550

FREDERICK LOCKER 551
A Nice Correspondent! 551
A Human Skull 551
To my Grandmother 552
My Neighbor Rose 552
The Old Cradle 553
The Russet Pitcher 553
Circumstance 554
Vanity Fair 554
Old Letters 555
My First-Born 555
Reply to a Letter enclosing a Lock of Hair 555
The Bear-Pit 556
The Skeleton in the Cupboard 556
The Crossing-Sweeper 557
A Song that never was sung 557
On an Old Muff 557
An Invitation to Rome 558
The Tester's Plea 560
Mrs. Smith 560
Mr. Placid's Flirtation 561

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER 562
A Legend of Provence 562
The Angel's Story 565
Judge not 567
One by One 567
A Woman's Question 567
A Woman's Answer 568
A Dead Past 568
A Doubting Heart 568
A Student 569
Linger, O Gentle Time 569
Life and Death 569
Be Strong 569
God's Gifts 570
The Angel of Death 570
Changes 570
The Wayside Inn 571
Incompleteness 572
A Legend of Bregenz 572
A Little Longer 574
Thankfulness 574
Murmurs 575
A Castle in the Air 575

DINAH M. MULOCK CRAIK 576
Philip my King 576
Thoughts in a Wheat-Field 576
Four Years 577
The Wind at Night 577
A Fable 577
Labor is Prayer 578
A Silly Song 578
An Honest Valentine 578
By the Alma River 579
Rothesay Bay 579
Living 580
In our Boat 580
The Night before the Mowing 580
October 581
Plighted 581
A Dead Baby 581
For Music 582
Sitting on the Shore 582

PAGE

At Eventide 582
Too Late 582
Summer gone 583
Westward Ho! 583
The Unknown Country 583

WALTER THORNBURY 584
The Death of King Warwolf 584
The Norseman's Serf 584
The Dying Viking 585
Faces in the Fire 585
Under the Cliffs 585

GERALD MASSEY 586
The Ballad of Babe Christabel 586
To-day and To-morrow 589
The Chivalry of Labor 590
O lay thy Hand in mine, Dear 590
My Love 590
Song 590
For Christie's Sake 591
Our White Dove 592
Our Little Child with Radiant Eyes 592
Desolate 593
Hope On, hope Ever 593
The People's Advent 593
The Martyr's Hill 594

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI 595
Love's Nocturn 595
The Portrait 596
Sister Helen 597
Stratton Water 599
The Stream's Secret 601
A New-Year's Burden 603
Love-Lily 603
A Little While 603
The Sea Limits 603
Sonnets 604

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM 605
Venus of the Needle 605
Æolian Harp 605
Oh! were my Love 606
A Dream 606
Lovely Mary Donnelly 606
Serenade 607
The Dirty Old Man 607
The Bright Little Girl 608
The Lighthouse 608
Lady Alice 608
Therania 609
Nanny's Sailor-Lad 609
Death deposed 609
The Mowers 610
Song 610
Down on the Shore 610

JEAN INGELOW 611
Divided 611
Honors 612
Supper at the Mill 617
The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire 620
Songs of Seven 621
Brothers, and a Sermon 624
The Four Bridges 630
A Mother showing the Portrait of her Child 637

ANNA LÆTITIA WARING 639
Hymns and Meditations (thirteen poems) 639

DORA GREENWELL 645
Repentance 645
When the Night and Morning meet 646
The Soul's Parting 646
Sonnets 646

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI 647
Dream-Land 647
At Home 647
A Triad 647
Cousin Kate 648
Noble Sisters 648
A Birthday 648
Remember 649
An Apple-Gathering 649
Three Seasons 649
"The Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge" 649
Advent 650
The Three Enemies 650

ALEXANDER SMITH 651
Squire Maurice 651
Lady Barbara 656
To ——— 657
The Night before the Wedding 657

Digitized by Google

PAGE
The Change 658
Sonnets 659

CHARLES S. CALVERLEY 660
The Arab 660
Lines on hearing the Organ 660
First Love 661
Sad Memories 662
Ballad 662
The Schoolmaster Abroad with his Son 663
Under the Trees 663
Motherhood 664
Flight 664
Lovers, and a Reflection 665
The Cock and the Bull 665
Gemini and Virgo 666

ROBERT BULWER-LYTTON (OWEN MEREDITH) 668
Night 668
The Magic Land 670
A Love-Letter 671
Count Rinaldo Rinaldi 672
Progress 673
The Portrait 674
Astarte 675
At Home during the Ball 675
At Home after the Ball 676
Midges 677
A Quiet Moment 678
On my Twenty-fourth Year 679
Small People 679
Failure 679
Requiescat 680
Good-Night in the Porch 680
The Parting of Launcelot and Guenevere 683
A Bird at Sunset 686
Changes 686
The Apple of Life 687
Retrospections 691
Song 691

WILLIAM MORRIS 692
The Death of Paris 692
The Son of Crœsus 698
The Defence of Guenevere 702
Summer Dawn 705

WILLIAM S. GILBERT 706
Ferdinando and Elvira 706
The Folly of Brown 707
The Yarn of the Nancy Bell 708
King Borria Bungalee Boo 709

ISA CRAIG KNOX 710
Ode on the Centenary of Burns 710
A Remembrance 711
After War 711
The Marriage Feast 711

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE 712
A Match 712
The Garden of Proserpine 713
Rococo 713
Rondel 714
In Memory of Walter Savage Landor 714
Ave atque Vale 715

DAVID GRAY 717
In the Shadows 717
Snow 721
A Winter Walk 722
By the Fire 722
The Anemone 723
My Brother 723

AUSTIN DOBSON 724
The Paradox of Time 724
A Dialogue from Plato 724
A Garden Idyl 725
A Virtuoso 726

PAGE
Incognita 726
The Love-Letter 727

ROBERT BUCHANAN 728
A London Idyl 728
Langley Lane 731
The Old Politician 731
A London Lyric 732
Charmian 733
The Brook 733

JOHN PAYNE 734
In Armida's Garden 734
A Farewell 735
The House of Sorrow 736

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY 738
The Music-Makers 738
May 738
Prophetic Birds 739
Song of Betrothal 739
Songs 740

SINGLE FAMOUS POEMS 741
My Mind to me a Kingdom is ..... *Byrd* 741
The Lye ..... *Raleigh* 741
Sonnet ..... *Sidney* 742
Man's Mortality ..... *Wastel* 742
A Happy Life ..... *Wotton* 743
Love me Little, Love me Long ..... *Anonymous* 743
The Will ..... *Donne* 743
In a Clear Starry Night ..... *Wither* 744
Song ..... *Carew* 744
Exequy ..... *King* 744
Song ..... *Herrick* 745
The Vanity of the World ..... *Quarles* 746
The Angler's Wish ..... *Walton* 746
Death's Final Conquest ..... *Shirley* 746
The Bride ..... *Suckling* 747
To Lucasta ..... *Lovelace* 747
They are all Gone ..... *Vaughan* 747
Song ..... *Sedley* 747
On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America ..... *Berkeley* 748
Lochaber no more ..... *Ramsay* 748
The Fly ..... *Bourne* 748
Cumnor Hall ..... *Mickle* 748
The Toper's Apology ..... *Morris* 750
To the Cuckoo ..... *Logan* 750
The Groves of Blarney ..... *Milliken* 750
To—— ..... *Spencer* 751
Night ..... *White* 751
Saint Patrick ..... *Anonymous* 751
The Pauper's Deathbed ..... *Southey* 752
Aileen ..... *Banim* 752
The Mariner's Dream ..... *Dimond* 752
The Swallow ..... *Aird* 753
The Woman of Three Cows ..... *Mangan* 753
The Three Sons ..... *Moultrie* 754
The Annuity ..... *Outram* 755
Lament of the Irish Emigrant ..... *Dufferin* 756
The Musical Frogs ..... *Blackie* 756
Old Souls ..... *Hake* 757
Summer Longings ..... *Mac-Carthy* 759
Spinning-Wheel Song ..... *Waller* 759
The Private of the Buffs ..... *Doyle* 760
A Christmas Hymn ..... *Dommett* 760
The Pauper's Drive ..... *Noel* 760
Abraham Lincoln ..... *Taylor* 761
Is it Come? ..... *Browne* 762
Lines on a Skeleton ..... *Anonymous* 762
The Memory of the Dead ..... *Ingram* 763
Cold in Earth ..... *Brontë* 763
Whence and Whither ..... *Palgrave* 763
The Place where Man should Die ..... *Barry* 765
Doris ..... *Munby* 765
Artemus Ward ..... *Anonymous* 765

INDEX OF AUTHORS 766

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

John Keats.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

JOHN KEATS.

JOHN KEATS was born in Moorfields, London, October 29, 1796. The exact place of his birth is said to have been a livery-stable which belonged to the family. He was sent to school at Enfield, where the master's son, Charles Cowden Clarke, became his intimate friend.

In 1811 Keats was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary; but he had inherited a small property, and as his tastes did not lie in the direction of surgery and medicine, he soon left the business and devoted himself entirely to poetry, at which he had been dabbling for some time.

He published a volume of his early poems in 1817, which seems not to have attracted any special attention, though he had won the admiration and friendship of Leigh Hunt, in whose *Examiner* some of his sonnets had appeared. In 1818 he published his longest poem, "Endymion," which opens with the oft-quoted line—

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

It was dedicated to the memory of Chatterton. This poem was severely criticised by *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*. Keats was extremely sensitive to criticism, and when he died, three years later, a story somehow sprang up that these attacks were the cause of his death. The truth was, that he was naturally delicate, with a tendency to consumption, and had overtasked himself by attending on a dying brother. Hawthorne, in "P.'s Correspondence," purporting to be written from London by an insane man who strangely mingles the past with the present, and both with fancy, alludes to this and at the same time gives by implication a delicate estimate of the poet: "Keats? No; I have not seen him except across a crowded street, with coaches, drays, horsemen, cabs, omnibuses, foot-passengers, and divers other sensual obstructions intervening betwixt his small and slender figure and my eager glance. I would fain have met him on the sea-shore, or beneath a natural arch of forest-trees, or the Gothic arch of an old cathedral, or among Grecian ruins, or at a glimmering fireside on the verge of evening, or at the twilight entrance of a cave, into the dreamy depths of which he would have led me by the hand; anywhere, in short, save at Temple Bar, where his presence was blotted out by the porter-swollen bulks of those gross Englishmen. I stood and watched him fading away, fading away along the pavement, and could hardly tell whether he were an actual man or a thought that had slipped out of my mind and clothed itself in human form and habiliments merely to beguile me. At one moment he put his handkerchief to his lips, and withdrew it, I am almost certain, stained with blood. You never saw any thing so fragile as his person. The truth is, Keats has all his life felt the effects of that terrible bleeding at the lungs caused by the article on his 'Endymion' in the *Quarterly Review*, and which so nearly brought him to the grave. Ever since he has glided about the world like a ghost, sighing a melancholy tone in the ear of here and there a friend, but never sending forth his voice to greet the multitude. I can hardly think him a great poet. The burden of a mighty genius would never have been imposed upon shoulders so physically frail and a spirit so infirmly sensitive. Great poets should have iron sinews."

In 1820 Keats published a third volume of poems, containing "The Eve of St. Agnes," which is perhaps his best, "Lamia," the unfinished "Hyperion," the "Ode to the Nightingale," and the much admired "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

Soon after the publication of this volume he went to Italy for his health, in company with his friend Mr. Severn, the artist, by whom he was very carefully nursed; but he died in Rome, on February 24, 1821. His last days were embittered by his disappointment at the treatment which his poetry had received, and saddened by his attachment for a young lady who was thus widowed before marriage. His remains were buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, and the epitaph suggested by himself was carved on his tombstone:

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Shelley, who admired him enthusiastically, made him the subject of his beautiful elegiac poem "Adonais." A year or two later the ashes of Shelley were laid beside those of the friend and poet whom he mourned.

The ridicule which was heaped upon Keats was largely due to political spite, rather than to calm judicial criticism. On the other hand, he was as violently admired by his friends as he had been abusively attacked by the reviewers. Yet, whatever the faults of his earlier works, his later unquestionably place him among the master-poets of his school. Richard Monckton Milnes has written his life and edited his letters.

Digitized by Google

LAMIA.

PART I.

Upon a time, before the faery broods
Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,
Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cowslip'd lawns,
The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft:
From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight
Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.
For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons pour'd
Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.
Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,
And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,
Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.
Ah, what a world of love was at her feet!
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.
From vale to vale, from wood to wood, he flew,
Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared her secret bed:
In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,
And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,
Such as once heard, in gentle heart, destroys
All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
"When from this wreathed tomb shall I awake?
When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy strife
Of hearts and lips? Ah, miserable me!"
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his speed,
The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson-barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
Dissolved, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries—
So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady elf,
Some demon's mistress, or the demon's self.
Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
And for her eyes—what could such eyes do there
But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair?
As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian air.
Her throat was serpent, but the words she spake
Came, as though bubbling honey, for Love's sake,
And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

"Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers, fluttering light,
I had a splendid dream of thee last night:
I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold,
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting clear,
Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan.
I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks,
And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou art!
Too gentle Hermes, has thou found the maid?"
Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
"Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high inspired!
Thou beauteous wreath with melancholy eyes,
Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled,—
Where she doth breathe!" "Bright planet, thou hast said,"
Return'd the snake, "but seal with oaths, fair God!"
"I swear," said Hermes, "by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry crown!"
Light flew his earnest words, among the blossoms blown.
Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
"Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of thine,
Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant days
She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble feet
Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet:
From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches green,
She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes unseen:
And by my power is her beauty veil'd
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.
Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my boon!"
Then, once again, the charmed God began

Digitized by Google

An oath, and through the serpent's ears it ran
Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping said,
"I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.
Stoop, Hermes, let me breath upon thy brow,
And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now."
The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it might seem
Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he burn'd;
Then, lighting on the printless verdure, turn'd
To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid arm,
Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean charm.
So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, cower'd, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand,
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd bland
And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the lees.
Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish drear,
Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.
The colours all inflamed throughout her train,
She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst.
And rubious-argent; of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, "Lycius! gentle Lycius!"—Borne aloft
With the bright mists about the mountains hoar,
These words dissolved: Crete's forests heard no more.

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Chenchreas' shore,
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy rack,
South-westward to Cleone. There she stood
About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passioned
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffodils.

Ah, happy Lycius!—for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flower'd lea
Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learn'd to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange
Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dispart
Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent
Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent,
And kept his rosy terms in idle languishment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairily
By the wayside to linger, we shall see;
But first 'tis fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
Of all she list, strange or magnificent,
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit went;
Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Nereids fair
Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly stair;
Or where God Bacchus drains his cups divine,
Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous pine;
Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian line.
And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager face,
And fell into a swooning love of him.
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she knew,
To Corinth from the shore; for freshly blew
The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen prow
In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood and incense rare.
Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire;
For by some freakful chance he made retire
From his companions, and set forth to walk,
Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth talk:
Over the solitary hills he fared,
Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star appeared

Digitized by Google

His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
Lamia beheld him coming, near, more near—
Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen
She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while her eyes
Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal white
Turn'd—syllabling thus, "Ah, Lycius bright!
And will you leave me on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown."
He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;
For so delicious were the words she sung
It seem'd he had loved them a whole summer long:
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore;
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure:
"Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
For pity do not this sad heart belie—
Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
Stay! though the greenest woods be thy domain,
Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade
Thy memory will waste me to a shade:—
For pity do not melt!"—"If I should stay,"
Said Lamia, "here, upon this floor of clay,
And pain my steps upon these flowers too rough,
What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
Empty of immortality and bliss!
Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below
In human climes, and live: Alas! poor youth,
What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? What serener palaces,
Where I may all my many senses please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?
It cannot be—Adieu!" So said, she rose
Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick to lose
The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires.
And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd days,
Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could miss
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thoughtfully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 'twas the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no more,
But wept alone those days, for why should she adore?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake enticed him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged aright,
That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guarantied to save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply,
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh;
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her sweet,
If 'twas too far that night for her soft feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all,
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced shade
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Digitized by Google

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and smooth bald crown,
Slow stepp'd, and robed in philosophic gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled: "Ah," said he,
"Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in dew?"—
"I'm wearied," said fair Lamia: "tell me who
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features: Lycius! wherefore did you blind
Yourself from his quick eyes?" Lycius replied,
"'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams."

While yet he spake they had arrived before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new,
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds Æolian
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample span
Of the wide doors disclosed a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befell,
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

PART II.

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's fast:—
That is a doubtful tale from fairy-land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench'd it quite: but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber-door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the eventide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbour'd in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.
The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing-bell.
"Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whisper'd he:
"Why do you think?" return'd she tenderly:
"You have deserted me; where am I now?
Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so."
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,—
"My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,
Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abash'd withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestical,
And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
While through the thronged streets your bridal car
Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
Her wild and timid nature to his aim;
Besides, for all his love, in self-despite,
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,
And, all-subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour

Digitized by Google

Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,
"Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,
I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee
Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,
As still I do. Hast any mortal name,
Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?
Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,
To share our marriage-feast and nuptial mirth?"
"I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;
My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:
My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
Even as you list invite your many guests:
But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
With any pleasure on me, do not bid
Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,
Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage song,
With other pageants; but this fair unknown
Had not a friend. So being left alone
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin,)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the fairy-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,
From either side their stems branch'd one to one
All down the aisled palace; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.
So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at first,
Came jasper panels; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees,
And with the larger wove in small intricacies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreaded guests would come to spoil her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip rout.
O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd hours,
And show to common eyes those secret bowers?
The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy brain,
Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marvelling: for they knew the street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair demesne;
So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;
'Twas Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt: 'twas just as he foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. "'Tis no common rule,
Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright throng
Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad spread;
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and perfume:
Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the soft
Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of smoke
From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they rose
Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds odorous.
Twelve sphered tables, by silk seats insphered,
High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry shine.
Thus loaded with a feast, the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a God.

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure press'd,
By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the feast
In white robes, and themselves in order placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of wealth could spring.

Soft went the music that soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowell'd under-song
Kept up among the guests discoursing low
At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow,
But when the happy vintage touch'd their brains
Louder they talk, and louder come the strains
Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous dyes,
The space, the splendour of the draperies,

Digitized by Google

The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy deed,
And every soul from human trammels freed,
No more so strange: for merry wine, sweet wine,
Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too divine.
Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes double bright:
Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest trees, branch-rent,
In baskets of bright osier'd gold were brought
High as the handles heap'd, to suit the thought
Of every guest; that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at his ease.

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?
What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hang
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for him
The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may swim
Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle wage
War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face,
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he took
Full-brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a look
'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled countenance,
And pledge him. The bald-head philosopher
Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or stir
Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Browceating her fair form, and troubling her sweet pride.
Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout touch,
As pale it lay upon the rosy couch:
'Twas icy, and the cold ran through his veins;
Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.
"Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost thou start?
Know'st thou that man?" Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses reel:
Some angry spell that loveliness absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs.
"Lamia!" he cried—and no soft-toned reply.
The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush; the stately music no more breathes;
The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths.
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased;
A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his hair.
"Lamia!" he shriek'd: and nothing but the shriek
With its sad echo did the silence break.
"Begone, foul dream!" he cried, gazing again
In the bride's face, where now no azure vein
Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft bloom
Misted the cheek; no passion to illume
The deep-recessed vision:—all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly white.
"Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruthless man!
Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous ban
Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,
May pierce them on the sudden with the thorn
Of painful blindness; leaving thee forlorn,
In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
Of conscience, for their long-offended might,
For all thine impious proud-heart sophistries,
Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard wretch!
Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids stretch
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
My sweet bride withers at their potency."
"Fool!" said the sophist, in an under-tone
Gruff with contempt; which a death-nighing moan
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost,
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
"Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still
Relented not, nor moved; "from every ill
Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"
Then Lamia breathed death-breath; the sophist's eye,
Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
"A Serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found,
And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body wound.*

* "Philostratus, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions.

Digitized by Google

ISABELLA,

OR THE POT OF BASIL;

A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO.

I.

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!
  Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye.
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
  Without some stir of heart, some malady;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
  It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II.

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
  With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
  But her full shape would all his seeing fill;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
  To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III.

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch,
  Before the door had given her to his eyes;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
  Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;
And constant as her vespers would he watch,
  Because her face was turn'd to the same skies;
And with sick longing all the night outwear,
To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV.

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
  Made their cheeks paler by the break of June:
"To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
  To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon."—
"O may I never see another night,
  Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's tune."—
So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,
Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

V.

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
  Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
  By every lull to cool her infant's pain:
"How ill she is," said he, "I may not speak,
  And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:
If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
And at the least will startle off her cares."

VI.

So said he one fair morning, and all day
  His heart beat awfully against his side;
And to his heart he inwardly did pray
  For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide
Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away—
  Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child:
Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

VII.

So once more he had waked and anguished
  A dreary night of love and misery,
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
  To every symbol on his forehead high;
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
  And straight all flush'd; so, lisped tenderly,
"Lorenzo!"—here she ceased her timid quest
But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII.

"O Isabella! I can half perceive
  That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever any thing believe,
  Believe how I love thee, believe how near
My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve
  Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive

IX.

"Love! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
  Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
  In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time."
So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
  And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:
Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X.

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
  Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
  The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
  Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

XI.

All close they met again, before the dusk
  Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
  Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
  Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
Ah! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII.

Were they unhappy then?—It cannot be—
  Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
  Too much of pity after they are dead,

When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."—BURTON's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 3, Sect. 2, Memb. 1., Subs. 1

Digitized by Google

Too many doleful stories do we see,
  Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;
Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII.

But, for the general award of love,
  The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;
Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
  And Isabella's was a great distress,
Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
  Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
  Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did swell
  In torched mines and noisy factories,
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
  In blood from stinging whip;—with hollow eyes
Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
  And went all naked to the hungry shark;
For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death
  The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe
  A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

XVI.

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts
  Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?—
Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts
  Were of more soft ascent than lazar-stairs?
Why were they proud? Because red-lined accounts
  Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?
Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

XVII.

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
  In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,
As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
  Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies;
The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
  And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-away,—
Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII.

How was it these same leger-men could spy
  Fair Isabella in her downy nest?
How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
  A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest
Into their vision covetous and sly!
  How could these money-bags see east and west?—
Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX.

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!
  Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
  And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
And of thy lilies, that do paler grow
  Now they can no more hear thy ghittern's tune,
For venturing syllables that ill beseem
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX.

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
  Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;
There is no other crime, no mad assail
  To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet:
But it is done—succeed the verse or fail—
  To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet;
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI.

These brethren having found by many signs
  What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
And how she loved him too, each unconfines
  His bitter thoughts to other, well-nigh mad
That he, the servant of their trade designs,
  Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII.

And many a jealous conference had they,
  And many times they bit their lips alone,
Before they fix'd upon a surest way
  To make the youngster for his crime atone;
And at the last, these men of cruel clay
  Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII.

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant
  Into the sunrise o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent
  Their footing through the dews; and to him said,
"You seem there in the quiet of content,
  Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
Calm speculation; but if you are wise,
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV.

"To-day we purpose, ay, this hour we mount
  To spur three leagues towards the Apennine;
Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
  His dewy rosary on the eglantine."
Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
  Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents' whine;
And went in haste, to get in readiness,
With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman's dress

Digitized by Google

XXV.

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,
Each third step did he pause, and listen'd oft
If he could hear his lady's matin-song,
Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;
And as he thus over his passion hung,
He heard a laugh full musical aloft;
When, looking up, he saw her features bright
Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI.

"Love, Isabel!" said he, "I was in pain
Lest I should miss to bid thee a good-morrow:
Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
Of a poor three hour's absence? but we'll gain
Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
Good-bye! I'll soon be back."—"Good-bye!" said she:
And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII.

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream
Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan
Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan
The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water
Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII.

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
There in that forest did his great love cease;
Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,
It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace
As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin:
They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX.

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,
Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
Because of some great urgency and need
In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.
Poor girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands;
To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX.

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
Sorely she wept until the night came on,
And then, instead of love, O misery!
She brooded o'er the luxury alone:
His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
And to the silence made a gentle moan,
Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
And on her couch low murmuring, "Where? O where?"

XXXI.

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
Its fiery vigil in her single breast;
She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
Upon the time with feverish unrest—
Not long—for soon into her heart a throng
Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,
And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII.

In the mid-days of autumn, on their eves
The breath of Winter comes from far away,
And the sick west continually bereaves
Of some gold tinge, and plays a roundelay
Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
To make all bare before he dares to stray
From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII.

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all pale,
Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
Could keep him off so long? They spake a tale
Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes
Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale;
And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud,
To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV.

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
But for a thing more deadly dark than all;
It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,
Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
For some few gasping moments; like a lance,
Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV.

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake;
For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
To speak as when on earth it was awake,
And Isabella on its music hung:
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briers among.

XXXVII.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof

Digitized by Google

From the poor girl by magic of their light,
The while it did unthread the horrid woof
Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII.

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet!
Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX.

"I am a shadow now, alas! alas!
Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling
Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,
While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
And many a chapel-bell the hour is telling,
Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,
And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL.

"I know what was, I feel full well what is,
And I should rage, if spirits could go mad;
Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
To be my spouse: thy paleness makes me glad:
Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
A greater love through all my essence steal."

XLI.

The Spirit mourn'd "Adieu!"—dissolved, and left
The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil:
It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
And in the dawn she started up awake;

XLII.

"Ha! ha!" said she, "I knew not this hard life,
I thought the worst was simple misery;
I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die;
But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife!
Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:
I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
And greet thee morn and even in the skies."

XLIII.

When the full morning came, she had devised
How she might secret to the forest hie;
How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
And sing to it one latest lullaby;
How her short absence might be unsurmised,
While she the inmost of the dream would try.
Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV.

See, as they creep along the river-side
How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,
And, after looking round the champaign wide,
Shows her a knife.—"What feverous hectic flame
Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,
That thou shouldst smile again?"—The evening came,
And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed;
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV.

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-yard,
And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole,
Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
And filling it once more with human soul?
Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI.

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as though
One glance did fully all its secrets tell;
Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;
Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to grow,
Like to a native lily of the dell:
Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII.

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies;
She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
And put it in her bosom, where it dries
And freezes utterly unto the bone
Those dainties made to still an infant's cries:
Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her care
But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII.

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
Until her heart felt pity to the core
At sight of such a dismal labouring,
And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:
Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;
At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX.

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circumstance?
Why linger at the yawning tomb so long?
O for the gentleness of old Romance,
The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!
Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
For hear, in truth, it doth not well belong
To speak:—O turn thee to the very tale,
And taste the music of that vision pale.

L.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
They cut away no formless monster's head.

Digitized by Google

But one, whose gentleness did well accord
With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:
If Love impersonate was ever dead,
Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
Twas love; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned.

LI.

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
And then the prize was all for Isabel:
She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam
With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
She drench'd away:—and still she comb'd, and kept
Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII.

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews
Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—
She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did choose
A garden-spot, wherein she laid it by,
And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII.

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
And she forgot the blue above the trees,
And she forgot the dells where waters run,
And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not: but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV.

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew
Nature besides, and life, from human fears,
From the fast-mouldering head there shut from view:
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV.

O Melancholy, linger here awhile!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI.

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene!
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery;
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low;
For simple Isabel is soon to be
Among the dead: she withers, like a palm
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII.

O leave the palm to wither by itself;
Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour:—
It may not be—those Baâlites of pelf,
Her brethren, noted the continual shower
From her dead eyes; and many a curious elf,
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII.

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean:
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX.

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
This hidden whim; and long they watch'd in vain;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain,
And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again;
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX.

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place:
The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again.—Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI.

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away!
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly!
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh!
Spirits of grief, sing not your "Well-a-way!
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII.

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously;
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was; and why
'Twas hid from her: "For cruel 'tis," said she,
"To steal my Basil-pot away from me."

Digitized by Google

LXIII.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd:
Still is the burthen sung—"O cruelty,
To steal my Basil-pot away from me!"

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

I.

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Imprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed.
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames fully many times declare.

VI.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young Virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain.
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with fairy fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes, and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

X.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords

Digitized by Google

Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her: but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race!

XII.

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII.

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlit room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV.

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV.

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney-nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her play, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII.

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII.

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
Whose passing-bell may, ere the midnight, toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

Digitized by Google

XXI.

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon:
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile, she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.

XXVIII.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucid syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Digitized by Google

XXXII.

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy;"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tunable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
O leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI.

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII.

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from fairy-land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL.

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-dropp'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the foot-worn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

Digitized by Google

HYPERION.*

BOOK I.

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestall'd haply in a palace-court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
How beautiful, if Sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but began;
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenor and deep organ-tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
"Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumb'rous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave:
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alternation slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
"O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it:
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have lost
My strong identity, my real self.

* If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of Hyperion, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with Endymion, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.—*Note to English edition.*

Digitized by Google

Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light:
Space region'd with life-air: and barren void;
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell—
Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus:—"But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?"—That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three. Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave, upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;—
Blazing Hyperion on his orbed fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagles' wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch,
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance
Went step for step with Thea through the woods
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothed silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies,
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full-blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: "O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, the splendour, and the symmetry.

Digitized by Google

I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp—
Fall!—No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
And bid old Saturn take his throne again."—
He spake, and ceased, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat, but came not forth;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
From overstrained might. Released, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach:
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;
And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
"O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engender'd, Son of Mysteries!
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating! at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:
Now I behold in you, fear, hope, and wrath;
Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God;
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

BOOK II.

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd

Digitized by Google

Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyrion,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wander'd;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iapetus another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else.
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delay'd, that scared the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight:
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? And she must chant
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise,
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;
Some started on their feet; some also shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd—all bow'd with reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up—"Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow gloom;—
And the which book ye know I ever kept

Digitized by Google

For my firm-based footstool:—Ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,—
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling
One against one, or two, or three, or all
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
Drown both, and press them both against earth's face,
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world;—not in that strife,
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!
O Titans, shall I say 'Arise!'—Ye groan:
Shall I say 'Crouch!'—Ye groan. What can I then?
O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
How we can war, how engine our great wrath!
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonied, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!"

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
"O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
But for this reason, that thou art the King
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be.
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first-fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:
Then thou first-born, and we the giant-race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might:
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble-winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforced me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire: farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

Whether through pozed conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene:
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
"O Father! I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear:
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;

Digitized by Google

Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
O melody no more; for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried, 'Apollo!'
O Father, and O Brethren! had ye felt
Those pains of mine! O Saturn, had'st thou felt,
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard!"

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like the sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
"Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
Thy scalding in the seas? What! have I roused
Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
O joy! for now I see you are not lost:
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus:
"Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies;
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done;
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
That was before our brows were taught to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;
That was before we knew the winged thing,
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!"

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the brow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near.
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,
He utter'd, while his hands, contemplative,
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light:
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, "Saturn!"
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

Digitized by Google

BOOK III.

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes!
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewilder'd shores.
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embower'd Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wander'd forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:
"How camest thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed form
Moved in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid forest. Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face,
Or I have dream'd."—"Yes," said the supreme shape,
"Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me youth,
What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new-born."—Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables.—"Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how;
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign! point forth some unknown thing:
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarm in the elements,
While I here idle listen on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
O tell me, lonely Goddess! by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
Mute thou remainest—Mute? yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations, and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine,
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal."—Thus the God,
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse

Digitized by Google

Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd;
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck,
During the pain, Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial * * * * * * *

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

TO SOME LADIES,

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL.

What though, while the wonders of nature exploring,
I cannot your light mazy footsteps attend;
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend:

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-stream rushes,
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove;
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,
Its spray that the wild-flower kindly bedews.

Why linger ye so, the wild labyrinth strolling?
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?
Ah! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
Responsive to sylphs, in the moonbeamy air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,
I see you are treading the verge of the sea:
And now! ah, I see it—you just now are stooping
To pick up the keepsake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fretwork of Heaven;
And smiles with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given;

It had not created a warmer emotion
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from you;
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the ocean,
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds,)
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

IMITATION OF SPENSER.

* * * * *

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,
And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill:
Crowning its lawny crest with amber flame,
Silvering the untainted gushes of its rill;
Which, pure from mossy beds, did down distil,
And, after parting beds of simple flowers,
By many streams a little lake did fill,
Which round its marge reflected woven bowers
And, in its middle space, a sky that never lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage bright,
Vying with fish of brilliant dye below;
Whose silken fins' and golden scales' light
Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby-glow
There saw the swan his neck of arched snow,
And oar'd himself along with majesty;
Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show
Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,
And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle
That in that fairest lake had placed been,
I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;
Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen:
For sure so fair a place was never seen
Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:
It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen
Of the bright waters; or as when on high,
Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the cerulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
Slopings of verdure through the glossy tide,
Which, as it were in gentle amity,
Rippled delighted up the flowery side;
As if to glean the ruddy tears it tried,
Which fell profusely from the rose-tree stem!
Haply it was the workings of its pride
In strife to throw upon the shore a gem
Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.

* * * * *

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE.

1.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Digitized by Google

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!—
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy-lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

1.

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness!
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea-shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

Digitized by Google

5.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO PSYCHE.

O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
Even into thine own soft-couched ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes!
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:
'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of Aurorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retired
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swinged censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in!

FANCY.

Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thoughts still spread beyond her:
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloys with tasting: What do then?
Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear fagot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the plowboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overaw'd,
Fancy, high commission'd: send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear:

Digitized by Google

Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meager from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

O, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Every thing is spoilt by use:
Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
Whose lip mature is ever new?
Where's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary? Where's the face
One would meet in every place?
Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's when her zone
Slipt in golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash;
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she'll bring.—
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

ODE.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

ROBIN HOOD.

TO A FRIEND.

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can

Digitized by Google

Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grené shawe;"
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his tufted grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

TO AUTUMN.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel-shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY.

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

Digitized by Google

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE was born near Bristol, September 19, 1796. He was the eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and inherited much of his genius. He entered Merton College, Oxford, and obtained a fellowship in 1818, but forfeited it by intemperate habits. He went to London and wrote for periodicals; removed to Ambleside to teach, but obtained no pupils, and died there in 1849. His sonnets have been universally admired. He wrote two prose works, a "Life of Massinger" and "Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire."

TO A FRIEND.

WHEN we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted:
Our love was Nature; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills:
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That, wisely doting, asked not why it doted,
And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills,
But now I find how dear thou wert to me;
That man is more than half of Nature's treasure,
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity.

SONG.

'TIS sweet to hear the merry lark,
That bids a blithe good-morrow;
But sweeter to hark, in the twinkling dark,
To the soothing song of sorrow.
O nightingale! What doth she ail?
And is she sad or jolly?
For ne'er on earth was sound of mirth
So like to melancholy.

The merry lark he soars on high,
No worldly thought o'ertakes him;
He sings aloud to the clear blue sky,
And the daylight that awakes him.
As sweet a lay, as loud, as gay,
The nightingale is trilling;
With feeling bliss, no less than his,
Her little heart is thrilling.

Yet ever and anon, a sigh
Peers through her lavish mirth;
For the lark's bold song is of the sky
And hers is of the earth.
By night and day she tunes her lay,
To drive away all sorrow;
For bliss, alas! to-night must pass,
And woe may come to-morrow.

SHE IS NOT FAIR TO OUTWARD VIEW.

SHE is not fair to outward view,
As many maidens be;
Her loveliness I never knew
Until she smiled on me:
Oh, then I saw her eye was bright—
A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold;
To mine they ne'er reply;
And yet I cease not to behold
The love-light in her eye:
Her very frowns are better far
Than smiles of other maidens are!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE soul of man is larger than the sky,
Deeper than ocean or the abysmal dark
Of the unfathomed centre. Like that ark
Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,
O'er the drowned hills, the human family,
And stock reserved of every living kind,
Lo, in the compass of the single mind,
The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie,
That make all worlds. Great poet, 'twas thy art
To know thyself, and in thyself to be
Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,
Or the firm fatal purpose of the heart
Can make of man. Yet thou wert still the same,
Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.

Digitized by Google

SAMUEL LOVER.

Samuel Lover was born in Dublin, in 1797. His father was a stock-broker. Samuel studied painting, was elected to the Royal Hibernian Society of Arts, and excelled in miniatures. He exhibited a portrait of Paganini, which gave him some reputation. But his best genius was for literature, and, encouraged by Thomas Moore, he turned to that. In 1832 he published "Legends and Stories of Ireland," with etchings by himself, which was well received, and two years later he issued a second series. In 1837 he removed to London, and made literature his sole profession. His novel "Rory O'More" was at once popular, and a dramatization of it was successful on the stage.

In 1839 he published "Songs and Ballads." His songs are his best poems, and more than a hundred of them were set to music, mainly by himself. These songs have been sung the world over, and are especially effective on the stage.

In 1844 he began an entertainment called "Irish Evenings," in which he was the sole performer—similar to Dibdin's "Whim of the Moment," and it was very successful. After giving these entertainments throughout Great Britain, he visited the United States, where they were equally well received; and on returning home in 1848 he began a new series founded on his experiences in America.

He published "Metrical Tales, and Other Poems" in 1860, and a complete edition of his poems has since been issued. Lover received a literary pension from the government during the last years of his life. He died July 6, 1868. His life, with selections from his unpublished papers and correspondence, by Bayle Bernard, was published in 1874.

RORY O'MORE; OR, GOOD OMENS.

Young Rory O'More courted Kathleen Bawn,
He was bold as a hawk—she as soft as the dawn,
He wished in his heart pretty Kathleen to please,
And he thought the best way to do *that* was to *tease*.
"Now, Rory, be aisy," sweet Kathleen would cry,
(Reproof on her lip, but a smile in her eye,)
"With your tricks I don't know, in troth, what I'm about,
Faith you've teased till I've put on my cloak inside out."
"Oh! jewel," says Rory, "that same is the way
You've thrated my heart for this many a day;
And 'tis plaz'd that I am, and why not to be sure?
For 'tis all for good luck," says bold Rory O'More.

"Indeed, then," says Kathleen, "don't think of the like,
For I half gave a promise to *soothering* Mike;
The ground that I walk on he loves, I'll be bound,"
"Faith," says Rory, "I'd rather love *you* than the ground."
"Now, Rory, I'll cry if you don't let me go;
Sure I drame ev'ry night that I'm hating you so!"
"Oh," says Rory, "that same I'm delighted to hear,
For *drames* always go by *conthrairies*, my dear;
Oh! jewel, keep draming that same till you die,
And bright morning will give dirty night the black lie!
And 'tis plaz'd that I am, and why not to be sure?
Since 'tis all for good luck," says bold Rory O'More.

"Arrah, Kathleen, my darlint, you've teased me enough,
Sure I've thrash'd for your sake Dinny Grimes and Jim Duff;
And I've made myself, drinking your health, quite a *baste*,
So I think, after that, I may *talk to the priest*." *
Then Rory, the rogue, stole his arm round her neck,
So soft and so white, without freckle or speck,
And he look'd in her eyes that were beaming with light,
And he kiss'd her sweet lips;—don't you think he was right?
"Now Rory, leave off, sir; you'll hug me no more,
That's eight times to-day you have kissed me before."
"Then here goes another," says he, "to make sure,
For there's luck in odd numbers," says Rory O'More.

* Paddy's mode of asking a girl to name the day.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

OH! WATCH YOU WELL BY DAYLIGHT.

The Irish peasant says, "Watch well by daylight, for then your own senses are awake to guard you: but keep no watch in darkness, for then God watches over you." This, however, can hardly be called a superstition, there is so much of *rightful* reverence in it: for though, in perfect truth, we are as dependent on God by day as by night, yet some allowance may be made for the poetic fondness of the saying.

Oh, watch you well by daylight,
By daylight may you fear,
But take no watch in darkness—
The angels then are near:
For Heav'n the gift bestoweth
Our waking life to keep,
But tender mercy showeth
To guard us in our sleep.
Then watch you well by daylight.

Oh, watch you well in pleasure,
For pleasure oft betrays,
But take no watch in sorrow
When joy withdraws its rays:
For in the hour of sorrow,
As in the darkness drear,
To Heav'n entrust the morrow—
The angels then are near.
Then watch you well by daylight.

THE ANGEL'S WHISPER.

A superstition of great beauty prevails in Ireland, that when a child smiles in its sleep, it is "talking with angels."

A baby was sleeping,
Its mother was weeping,
For her husband was far on the wild raging sea;
And the tempest was swelling
Round the fisherman's dwelling,
And she cried, "Dermot, darling, oh come back to me!"

Her beads while she numbered,
The baby still slumbered,
And smiled in her face as she bended her knee;
"O blest be that warning,
My child, thy sleep adorning,
For I know that the angels are whispering with thee.

"And while they are keeping
Bright watch o'er thy sleeping,
Oh, pray to them softly, my baby, with me!
And say thou wouldst rather
They'd watch o'er thy father!—
For I know that the angels are whispering with thee."

The dawn of the morning
Saw Dermot returning,
And the wife wept for joy her babe's father to see;
And closely caressing
Her child, with a blessing,
Said, "I knew that the angels were whispering with thee."

THE BLARNEY.

There is a certain coign-stone on the summit of Blarney Castle, in the county of Cork, the kissing of which is said to impart the gift of persuasion. Hence the phrase, applied to those who make a flattering speech—"You've kissed the Blarney-Stone."

Oh! did you ne'er hear of "the Blarney,"
That's found near the banks of Killarney?
Believe it from me,
No girl's heart is free,
Once she hears the sweet sound of the Blarney.
For the Blarney's so great a deceiver,
That a girl thinks you're there, though you leave her;
And never finds out
All the tricks you're about,
Till she's quite gone herself—with your Blarney.

Oh! say, would you find this same "Blarney?"
There's a castle, not far from Killarney,
On the top of its wall—
(But take care you don't fall)
There's a stone that contains all this Blarney.
Like a magnet its influence such is,
That attraction it gives all it touches;
If you kiss it they say,
From that blessed day,
You may kiss whom you please with your Blarney.

ST. KEVIN:

A LEGEND OF GLENDALOUGH.

At Glendalough lived a young saint,
In odor of sanctity dwelling,
An old-fashion'd odor, which now
We seldom or never are smelling;
A book or a hook were to him
The utmost extent of his wishes;
Now, a snatch at the "Lives of the Saints;"
Then, a catch at the lives of the fishes.

There was a young woman one day,
Stravagin * along by the lake, sir;
She looked hard at St. Kevin, they say,
But St. Kevin no notice did take, sir.
When she found looking hard wouldn't do,
She look'd soft—in the old sheep's-eye fashion;
But, with all her sheep's eyes, she could not
In St. Kevin see signs of soft passion.

"You're a great hand at fishing," says Kate;
"'Tis yourself that knows how, faith, to hook them;
But when you have caught them *agra*,
Don't you want a young woman to cook them?"
Says the saint, "I am '*sayrious inclined*,'
I intend taking orders for life, dear."
"Only marry," says Kate, "and you'll find
You'll get orders enough from your wife, dear."

* Sauntering.

Digitized by Google

"You shall never be flesh of my flesh,"
Says the saint, with an anchorite groan, sir;
"I see that myself," answer'd Kate,
"I can only be 'bone of your bone,' sir.
And even your bones are so scarce,"
Said Miss Kate, at her answers so glib, sir,
"That I think you would not be the worse
Of a little additional rib, sir."

The saint, in a rage, seized the lass—
He gave her one twirl round his head, sir,
And, before Doctor Arnott's invention,
Prescrib'd her a watery bed, sir.
Oh!—cruel St. Kevin!—for shame!
When a lady her heart came to barter,
You should not have been Knight of the Bath,
But have bowed to the order of Garter.

PADDY BLAKE'S ECHO:

ONE OF THE WONDERS OF KILLARNEY.

In the gap of Dunlo
There's an echo, or so,
And some of them echoes is very surprisin';
You'll think, in a stave
That I mane to desaive,
For a ballad's a thing you expect to find lies in.*
But visibly thrue
In that hill forninst you
There's an echo as plain and as safe as the Bank, too;
But civilly spake,
"How d'ye do Paddy Blake?"
The echo politely says, "Very well, thank you!"

One day Teddy Keogh
With Kate Connor did go
To hear from the echo such wondherful talk, sir;
But the echo, they say,
Was conthrairy that day,
Or perhaps Paddy Blake had gone out for a walk, sir.
So Ted says to Kate,
"'Tis too hard to be bate
By that deaf and dumb baste of an echo, so lazy,
But if we both shout
At each other, no doubt,
We'll make up an echo between us, my daisy!"

"Now, Kitty," says Teddy,
"To answer be ready."
"Oh, very well, thank you," cried out Kitty then, sir;
"Would *you* like to wed,
Kitty darlin'?" says Ted.
"Oh, very well thank you," says Kitty again, sir.
"D'ye like *me?*" says Teddy;
And Kitty, quite ready.
Cried, "Very well, thank you!" with laughter beguiling.
Now won't you confess
Teddy could not do less
Than pay his respects to the lips that were smiling!

Oh, dear Paddy Blake,
May you never forsake
Those hills that return us such echoes endearing;
And, girls, all translate
The sweet echoes like Kate,
No faithfulness doubting, no treachery fearing.
And, boys, be you ready,
Like frolicsome Teddy,
Be *earnest* in loving, though given to *joking;*
And, when thus inclined,
May all true lovers find
Sweet echoes to answer from hearts they're in voking!

* *'Tis too true to be put in a ballad*, is an old Irish saying.

THE WAR-SHIP OF PEACE.

The Americans exhibited much sympathy toward Ireland when the famine raged there in 1847. A touching instance was then given how the better feelings of our nature may employ even the enginery of destruction to serve the cause of humanity: an American frigate (the *Jamestown*, I believe) was dismantled of all her warlike appliances, and placed at the disposal of the charitable to carry provisions.

Sweet Land of Song! thy harp doth hang
Upon the willows now,
While famine's blight and fever's pang
Stamp misery on thy brow;
Yet take thy harp, and raise thy voice,
Though faint and low it be,
And let thy sinking heart rejoice
In friends still left to thee!

Look out—look out—across the sea
That girds thy emerald shore,
A ship-of-war is bound for thee,
But with no warlike store;
Her thunder sleeps—'tis Mercy's breath
That wafts her o'er the sea;
She goes not forth to deal out death,
But bears new life to thee!

Thy wasted hand can scarcely strike
The chords of grateful praise;
Thy plaintive tone is now unlike
Thy voice of former days;
Yet, even in sorrow, tuneful still,
Let Erin's voice proclaim
In bardic praise, on every hill,
Columbia's glorious name!

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

The brief period which succeeds the autumnal close, called "The Indian summer"—a reflex, as it were, of the early portion of the year, strikes a stranger in America as peculiarly beautiful, and quite charmed me.

When summer's verdant beauty flies,
And autumn glows with richer dyes,
A softer charm beyond them lies—
It is the Indian summer.
Ere winter's snows and winter's breeze
Bereave of beauty all the trees,
The balmy spring renewal sees
In the sweet Indian summer.

Digitized by Google

And thus, dear love, if early years
Have drown'd the germ of joy in tears,
A later gleam of hope appears—
Just like the Indian summer:
And ere the snows of age descend,
Oh trust me, dear one, changeless friend,
Our falling years may brightly end—
Just like the Indian summer.

MOLLY CAREW.

Och hone! and what will I do?
Sure my love is all crost
Like a bud in the frost;
And there's no use at all in my going to bed,
For 'tis *dhrames* and not sleep comes into my head,
And 'tis all about you,
My sweet Molly Carew—
And indeed 'tis a sin and a shame;
You're complater than Nature
In every feature,
The snow can't compare
With your forehead so fair,
And I rather would see just one blink of your eye
Than the purtiest star that shines out of the sky,
And by this and by that,
For the matter o' that,
You're more distant by far than that same!
Och hone! *weirasthru!*
I'm alone in this world without you.

Och hone! but why should I spake
Of your forehead and eyes,
When your nose it defies
Paddy Blake, the schoolmaster, to put it in rhyme?
Though there's one Burke, he says, that would call it *snub*lime,
And then for your cheek!
Throth, 'twould take him a week
Its beauties to tell, as he'd rather.
Then your lips! oh, *machree!*
In their beautiful glow,
They a patthern might be
For the cherries to grow.
'Twas an apple that tempted our mother, we know,
For apples were *scarce*, I suppose, long ago;
But at this time o' day,
'Pon my conscience I'll say
Such cherries might tempt a man's father!
Och hone! *weirasthrue!*
I'm alone in this world without you.

Och hone! by the man in the moon,
You *taze* me all ways
That a woman can plaze,
For you dance twice as high with that thief, Pat Magee,
As when you take share of a jig, dear, with me,
Though the piper I bate,
For fear the owld chate
Wouldn't play you your favorite tune;
And when you're at mass
My devotion you crass,
For 'tis thinking of you
I am, Molly Carew,
While you wear on purpose, a bonnet so deep,
That I can't at your sweet purty face get a peep;—
Oh, lave off that bonnet,
Or else I'll lave on it
The loss of my wandherin' sowl!
Och hone! *weirasthru!*
Och hone! like an owl,
Day is night, dear, to me, without you!

Och hone! don't provoke me to do it;
For there's girls by the score
That loves me—and more,
And you'd look very quare if some morning you'd meet
My weddin' all marchin' in pride down the sthreet;
Throth, you'd open your eyes,
And you'd die with surprise,
To think 'twasn't you was come to it!
And faith, Katty Naile,
And her cow, I go bail,
Would jump if I'd say,
"Katty Naile, name the day."
And though you're fair and fresh as a morning in May,
While she's short and dark like a cowld winther's day,
Yet if you don't repent
Before Easther, when Lent
Is over I'll marry for spite!
Och hone! *weirasthru!*
And when I die for you,
My ghost will haunt you every night.

THE HAPPIEST TIME IS NOW.

Talk not to me of future bliss!
Talk not to me of joys gone by!
For us, the happiest hour is this,
When love bids time to fly:
The future—doubt may overcast,
To shadow Hope's young brow;
Oblivion's veil may shroud the past—
The happiest time is now!

Though flowers in spicy vases thrown
Some odor yet exhale,
Their fragrance, ere the bloom was flown,
Breathed sweeter on the gale:
Like faded flowers, each parted bliss
Let memory keep—but how
Can joy that's past be like to this?
The happiest time is now!

Unmark'd our course before us lies
O'er time's eternal tide;
And soon the sparkling ripple dies
We raise, as on we glide;
Our barks the brightest bubbles fling
Forever from the prow;
Then let us gayly sail, and sing,
"The happiest time is now!"

Digitized by Google

THE SILENT FAREWELL.

In silence we parted, for neither could speak,
But the tremulous lip and the fast-fading cheek
To both were betraying what neither could tell,
How deep was the pang of that silent farewell!

There are signs—ah! the slightest—that love understands,
In the meeting of eyes—in the parting of hands;
In the quick breathing sighs that of deep passion tell—
Oh, such were the signs of our silent farewell!

There's a language more glowing love teaches the tongue
Than poet e'er dreamed, or than minstrel e'er sung;
But oh, far beyond all such language could tell,
The love that *was* told in that silent farewell!

WHAT WILL YOU DO, LOVE?

"What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sail flowing,
The seas beyond?—
What will you do, love, when waves divide us,
And friends may chide us
For being fond?"
"Though waves divide us, and friends be chiding,
In faith abiding,
I'll still be true!
And I'll pray for thee on the stormy ocean,
In deep devotion—
That's what I'll do!"

"What would you do, love, if distant tidings
Thy fond confidings
Should undermine?—
And I, abiding 'neath sultry skies,
Should think other eyes
Were as bright as thine?"
"Oh, name it not! though guilt and shame
Were on thy name,
I'd still be true:
But that heart of thine—should another share it—
I could not bear it!
What would I do?"

"What would you do, love, when home returning,
With hopes high-burning,
With wealth for you,
If my bark, which bounded o'er foreign foam,
Should be lost near home—
Ah! what would you do?"
"So thou wert spar'd—I'd bless the morrow
In want and sorrow,
That left me you;
And I'd welcome thee from the wasting billow,
This heart thy pillow—
That's what I'd do!"

PADDY'S PASTORAL RHAPSODY.

When Molly, th' other day, sir,
Was makin' of the hay, sir,
I ask'd her for to be my bride,
And Molly she began to chide;
Says she, "You are too young, dear Pat."
Says I, "My jew'l, I'll mend o' that."
"You are too poor," says she, beside,
When to convince her, then, I tried,
That wealth is an invintion
The wise should never mintion,
And flesh is grass, and flowers will fade,
And it's better be wed than die an owld maid.

The purty little sparrows
Have neither ploughs nor harrows,
Yet they live at aise, and are contint,
Bekase, you see, they pay no rint;
They have no care nor flustherin',
About diggin' or *industherin'*;
No foolish pride their comfort hurts—
For they *eat* the flax, and wear no shirts—
For wealth is an invintion, &c., &c.

Sure Nature clothes the hills, dear,
Without any tailor's bills, dear;
And the bees they sip their sweets, my sowl,
Though they never had a sugar-bowl,
The dew it feeds the rose of June—
But 'tis not with a silver spoon:
Then let us patthern take from those,
The birds and bees, and lovely rose,
For wealth is an invintion, &c., &c.

Here's a cup to you, my darlin',
Though I'm not worth a farthin',
I'll pledge my coat to drink your health,
And then I'll envy no man's wealth;
For when I'm drunk I think I'm rich,
I've a feather bed in every ditch,
I dhrame o' you, my heart's delight,
And how could I pass a pleasanter night?
For wealth is an invintion, &c., &c.

THE LOW-BACK'D CAR.

When first I saw sweet Peggy
'Twas on a market-day,
A low-back'd car she drove, and sat
Upon a truss of hay;
But when that hay was blooming grass,
And deck'd with flowers of spring,
No flower was there
That could compare
To the blooming girl I sing,
As she sat in her low-back'd car—
The man at the turnpike bar
Never ask'd for the toll—
But just rubbed his owld poll,
And look'd after the low-back'd car!

In battle's wild commotion,
The proud and mighty Mars,
With hostile scythes, demands his tithes
Of Death, in warlike cars;

Digitized by Google

But Peggy—peaceful goddess—
Has darts in her bright eye,
That knock men down
In the market town,
As right and left they fly—
While she sits in her low-back'd car,
Than battle more dangerous far,
For the docthor's art
Cannot cure the heart
That is hit from that low-back'd car.

Sweet Peggy, round her car, sir,
Has sthrings of ducks and geese.
But the scores of hearts she slaughthers
By far outnumber these;
While she among her poulthry sits,
Just like a turtle dove,
Well worth the cage,
I do engage,
Of the blooming God of Love!
As she sits in her low-back'd car,
The lovers come near and far,
And envy the chicken
That Peggy is pickin'
As she sits in the low-back'd car.

I'd rather own that car, sir,
With Peggy by my side,
Than a coach and four, and goold *galore*,*
And a lady for my bride;
For the lady would sit *forninst* † me,
On a cushion made with taste,
While Peggy would sit beside me,
With my arm around her waist,
As we dhrove in the low-back'd car,
To be married by Father Maher—
Oh, my heart would beat high
At her glance and her sigh—
Though it beat in a low-back'd car.

WIDOW MACHREE.

Widow *Machree*, it's no wonder you frown,
Och hone! Widow Machree;
Faith it ruins your looks, that same dirty black gown,
Och hone! Widow Machree.
How altered your air,
With that close cap you wear—
'Tis destroying your hair
Which should be flowing free;
Be no longer a churl
Of its black silken curl,
Och hone! Widow Machree!

Widow Machree, now the summer is come,
Och hone! Widow Machree:
When every thing smiles, should a beauty look glum?
Och hone! Widow Machree.
See the birds go in pairs,
And the rabbits and hares—
Why even the bears
Now in couples agree;
And the mute little fish,
Though they can't spake, they wish,
Och hone! Widow Machree.

Widow Machree, and when winter comes in,
Och hone! Widow Machree,
To be poking the fire all alone is a sin,
Och hone! Widow Machree;
Sure the shovel and tongs
To each other belongs,
And the kettle sings songs
Full of family glee;
While alone with your cup,
Like a hermit, *you* sup,
Och hone! Widow Machree.

And how do you know, with the comforts I've towld,
Och hone! Widow Machree,
But you're keeping some poor fellow out in the cowld?
Och hone! Widow Machree:
With such sins on your head
Sure your peace would be fled,
Could you sleep in your bed
Without thinking to see
Some ghost or some sprite,
That would wake you each night,
Crying, "Och hone! Widow Machree?"

Then take my advice, darling Widow Machree,
Och hone! Widow Machree;
And with my advice, faith, I wish you'd take me,
Och hone! Widow Machree.
You'd have me to desire
Then to sit by the fire,
And sure Hope is no liar
In whispering to me,
That the ghosts would depart,
When you'd me near your heart,
Och hone! Widow Machree.

FATHER-LAND AND MOTHER-TONGUE.

Our Father-land! and wouldst thou know
Why we should call it "Father-land?"
It is, that Adam, here below,
Was made of earth by Nature's hand;
And he, our father, made of earth,
Hath peopled earth on every hand,
And we, in memory of his birth,
Do call our country, "Father-land."

At first in Eden's bowers, they say,
No sound of speech had Adam caught,
But whistled like a bird all day—
And maybe 'twas for want of thought:
But Nature, with resistless laws,
Made Adam soon surpass the birds,
She gave him lovely Eve—because
If he'd a wife—they must *have words*.

And so the Native-land I hold,
By male descent is proudly mine;
The language, as the tale hath told,
Was given in the female line.
And thus we see on either hand,
We name our blessings whence they've sprung,
We call our country Father-*land*,
We call our language Mother-*tongue*.

* Plenty. † Before.

Digitized by Google

THE BIRTH OF SAINT PATRICK.

On the eighth day of March it was, some people say,
That Saint Pathrick at midnight he first saw the day;
While others declare 'twas the ninth he was born,
And 'twas all a mistake between midnight and morn;
For mistakes *will* occur in a hurry and shock,
And some blam'd the babby—and some blam'd the clock—
'Till with all their cross questions sure no one could know,
If the child was too fast—or the clock was too slow.

Now the first faction fight in owld Ireland, they say,
Was all on account of Saint Pathrick's birthday,
Some fought for the eighth—for the ninth more would die,
And who wouldn't see right, sure they blacken'd his eye!
At last, both the factions so positive grew,
That *each* kept a birthday, so Pat then had *two*,
Till Father Mulcahy, who showed them their sins,
Said, "No one could have two birthdays, but a *twins*."

Says he, "Boys, don't be fightin' for eight or for nine,
Don't be always dividin'—but sometimes combine;
Combine eight with nine, and seventeen is the mark,
So let that be his birthday."—"Amen," says the clerk.
"If he wasn't a *twins*, sure our hist'ry will show—
That, at least, he's worth any *two* saints that we know!"
Then they all got blind dhrunk—which complated their bliss,
And we keep up the practice from that day to this.

MOLLY BAWN.

O! Molly Bawn, why leave me pining,
All lonely waiting here for you?
The stars above are brightly shining
Because—they've nothing else to do.
The flowers, late, were open keeping,
To try a rival blush with you,
But their mother, Nature, set them sleeping,
With their rosy faces wash'd—with dew.

Now the pretty flowers were made to bloom, dear,
And the pretty stars were made to shine,
And the pretty girls were made for the boys, dear,
And maybe you were made for mine!

The wicked watch-dog here is snarling—
He takes me for a thief, you see;
For he knows I'd steal you, Molly darling—
And then transported I should be.

'TIS SWEET TO REMEMBER.

Oh! 'tis sweet to remember how brightly
The days o'er us swiftly have flown,
When the hearts that we prize beat as lightly,
And fed upon hopes like our own;
When with grief we were scarcely acquainted,
While joy was our own bosom friend;
Oh! days—wing'd too swiftly with pleasure,
Ye are past—and our dream's at an end.

The walks, were we've roam'd without tiring,
The songs that together we've sung—
The jest, to whose merry inspiring
Our mingling of laughter hath rung—
Oh! trifles like these become precious,
Embalm'd in the mem'ry of years:
The smiles of the past—so remember'd—
How often they waken our tears!

THE JAUNTING CAR.

A full and faithful account I'll sing
Of the wonderful things that in Ireland are;
And first I would fain to your notice bring
That magic contrivance, a Jaunting Car.
For its magic is great, as I'll soon impart,
And naught can compare to it near or far;
Would you find the soft side of a lady's heart,
Just sit by her side on a Jaunting Car:
The lordly brougham, the ducal coach,
My lady's chariot, less speedy are
To make their way to church, they say,
Than a nice little drive on a Jaunting Car.

The Greeks and Romans fine cars display'd,
If to history you'll let me go back so far;
But, the wretches, in these it was war they made,
While 'tis love that is made on a Jaunting Car.
But in love, as in war, you may kill your man,
And if you're inclined to proceed so far,
Just call him out, and go ride about
A mile and a half on a Jaunting Car.
Let lovers praise the moon's soft rays,
The falling dew or the rising star,
The streamlet's side at the even-tide,
But give *me* the side of a Jaunting Car.

Ere Cupid was taught to take steps with art,
(Little staggering bob, as most babies are,)
His mother she bought him a little go-cart—
'Twas the earliest form of the Jaunting Car.
And the walking gift it can soon impart
To all who to Cupid inclined are,
If you would walk off with a lady's heart,
Just take her a drive on a Jaunting Car.
The cushions soft as the tale that's told,
The shafts as certain as Cupid's are,
The springs go bump—and your heart goes jump,
At the thumping vows on a Jaunting Car.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

William Motherwell was born in Glasgow, October 13, 1797. His father was a merchant. A few years later the family removed to Edinburgh, and in 1805 William became a pupil of William Lennie. At this school, in the summer of 1807, he first met Jane Morrison, the heroine of his famous poem. She was the daughter of a brewer at Alloa, and is described by her teacher as a pretty girl, with light-brown hair, dark eyes, and a sweet and gentle expression.

In 1823 she married John Murdoch, merchant, and in 1829 was left a widow, with three children. She never met Motherwell in after-life, and did not know that his poem referred to her until several years after it was published. It is said that he made the first draft of the poem when he was fourteen years old, and all his life he was working upon it, altering, adding, and polishing.

He finished his education in the High School of Edinburgh and the Grammar School of Paisley, and in his fifteenth year became a clerk in the office of the sheriff-clerk of Paisley. He attended the Latin and Greek classes in the University of Glasgow, and in 1819 was appointed Sheriff-clerk-depute for the county of Renfrew.

Motherwell had made verses when a boy, and in 1818 he contributed some to a sort of annual published at Greenock. In 1819 he edited "The Harp of Renfrewshire," a collection of songs, and in 1827 he published "Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern," which has become a standard work. In 1828 he started the *Paisley Magazine*, which lived but one year, and at the same time he became editor of the *Paisley Advertiser*, a Conservative paper. In 1830 he removed to Glasgow and took editorial charge of the *Courier*. He first collected his poems into a volume, under the title "Poems, Narrative and Lyrical," in 1832. He died suddenly, of apoplexy, on the 1st of November, 1835.

Motherwell was a small man, but well formed and muscular, with a large head. He was a good boxer and fencer, and had a strong liking for military exercises. Some of his martial lyrics are among the finest in the language. Of his pathetic poems there is but one opinion.

JEANIE MORRISON.

I've wander'd east, I've wander'd west,
  Through mony a weary way,
But never, never can forget
  The love o' life's young day!
The fire that's blawn on Beltane e'en
  May weel be black gin Yule:
But blacker fa' awaits the heart
  Where first fond luve grows cule.

O dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
  The thochts o' bygone years
Still fling their shadows owre my path,
  And blind my een wi' tears;
They blind my een wi' saut, saut tears;
  And sair and sick I pine,
As memory idly summons up
  The blythe blinks o' langsyne.

'Twas then we luvit ilk ither weel,
  'Twas then we twa did part;
Sweet time—sad time! twa bairns at schule,
  Twa bairns, and but ae heart!
'Twas then we sat on ae laigh bink,
  To leir ilk ither lear;
And tones, and looks, and smiles were shed,
  Remember'd evermair.

I wonder, Jeanie, aften yet,
  When sitting on that bink,
Cheek touchin' cheek, loof lock'd in loof,
  What our wee heads could think.
When baith bent doun owre ae braid page,
  Wi' ae buik on our knee,
Thy lips were on thy lesson—but
  My lesson was in thee.

Oh, mind ye how we hung our heads,
  How cheeks brent red wi' shame,
Whene'er the schule-weans, laughin', said
  We cleek'd thegether hame?
And mind ye o' the Saturdays
  (The schule then skailt at noon)
When we ran aff to speel the braes—
  The broomy braes o' June?

My head rins round and round about,
  My heart flows like a sea,
As ane by ane the thoughts rush back
  O' schule-time and o' thee.
Oh, mornin' life! oh, mornin' luve!
  Oh, lichtsome days and lang,
When hinnied hopes around our hearts
  Like simmer blossoms sprang!

Oh, mind ye, luve, how aft we left
  The deavin' dinsome toun,

Digitized by Google

To wander by the green burnside,
And hear its waters croon?
The simmer leaves hung owre our heads,
The flowers burst round our feet,
And in the gloamin' o' the wood
The throssil whusslit sweet.

The throssil whusslit in the wood,
The burn sang to the trees,
And we, with Nature's heart in tune,
Concerted harmonies;
And on the knowe abune the burn,
For hours thegether sat
In the silentness o' joy, till baith
Wi' very gladness grat.

Ay, ay, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Tears trickled doun your cheek,
Like dew-beads on a rose, yet nane
Had ony power to speak?
That was a time, a blessed time,
When hearts were fresh and young,
When freely gush'd all feelings forth,
Unsyllabled—unsung!

I marvel, Jeanie Morrison,
Gin I ha'e been to thee
As closely twined wi' earliest thochts,
As ye ha'e been to me!
Oh, tell me gin their music fills
Thine heart, as it does mine;
Oh, say gin e'er your heart grows grit
Wi' dreamings o' langsyne?

I've wander'd east, I ve wander'd west,
I've borne a weary lot;
But in my wanderings, far or near,
Ye never were forgot.
The fount that first burst frae this heart
Still travels on its way,
And channels deeper as it rins,
The luve o' life's young day.

Oh, dear, dear Jeanie Morrison,
Since we were sinder'd young,
I've never seen your face, nor heard
The music o' your tongue;
But I could hug all wretchedness,
And happy could I die,
Did I but ken your heart still dream'd
O' bygane days and me!

MY HEID IS LIKE TO REND, WILLIE.

My heid is like to rend Willie—
My heart is like to break;
I 'm wearin' aff my feet, Willie,
I 'm dyin' for your sake!
Oh, lay your cheek to mine, Willie,
Your hand on my briest-bane,—
Oh, say, ye 'll think on me, Willie,
When I am deid and gane!

It 's vain to comfort me, Willie—
Sair grief maun ha'e its will;
But let me rest upon your briest
To sab and greet my fill.

Let mé sit on your knee, Willie—
Let me shed by your hair,
And look into the face, Willie,
I never sall see mair!

I 'm sittin' on your knee, Willie,
For the last time in my life,—
A puir heart-broken thing, Willie,
A mither, yet nae wife.
Ay, press your hand upon my heart,
And press it mair and mair,—
Or it will burst the silken twine,
Sae strang is its despair.

Oh, wae 's me for the hour, Willie,
When we thegither met—
Oh, wae 's me for the time, Willie,
That our first tryst was set!
Oh, wae 's me for the loanin' green
Where we were wont to gae,—
And wae 's me for the destinie
That gart me luve thee sae!

Oh, dinna mind my words, Willie—
I downa seek to blame;
But oh, it 's hard to live, Willie,
And dree a warld's shame!
Het tears are hailin' ower your cheek,
And hailin' ower your chin:
Why weep ye sae for worthlessness,
For sorrow, and for sin?

I 'm weary o' this warld, Willie,
And sick wi' a' I see,
I canna live as I ha'e lived,
Or be as I should be.
But fauld unto your heart, Willie,
The heart that still is thine,—
And kiss ance mair the white, white cheek
Ye said was red langsyne.

A stoun' gaes through my heid, Willie—
A sair stoun' through my heart;
Oh, haud me up and let me kiss
Thy brow ere we twa pairt.
Anither, and anither yet!—
How fast my life-strings break!—
Fareweel! fareweel! through yon kirk-yard
Step lichtly for my sake!

The lav'rock in the lift, Willie,
That lilts far ower our heid,
Will sing the morn as merrilie
Abune the clay-cauld deid;
And this green turf we 're sittin' on,
Wi' dew-draps shimmerin' sheen,
Will hap the heart that luvit thee
As warld has seldom seen.

But oh, remember me, Willie,
On land where'er ye be—
And oh, think on the leal, leal heart,
That ne'er luvit ane but thee!
And oh, think on the cauld, cauld mools
That file my yellow hair,—
That kiss the cheek, and kiss the chin
Ye never sall kiss mair!

Digitized by Google

WEARIE'S WELL.

In a saft simmer gloamin',
  In yon dowie dell,
It was there we twa first met,
  By Wearie's cauld well.
We sat on the broom-bank,
  And look'd in the burn,
But sidelang we look'd on
  Ilk ither in turn.

The corncraik was chirming
  His sad eerie cry,
And the wee stars were dreaming
  Their path through the sky;
The burn babbled freely
  Its love to ilk flower,
But we heard and we saw nought
  In that blessed hour.

We heard and we saw nought,
  Above or around;
We felt that our luve lived,
  And loathed idle sound.
I gazed on your sweet face
  Till tears fill'd my ee,
And they drapt on your wee loof—
  A warld's wealth to me.

Now the winter snaw's fa'ing
  On bare holm and lea,
And the cauld wind is strippin'
  Ilk leaf aff the tree.
But the snaw fa's not faster,
  Nor leaf disna part
Sae sune frae the bough, as
  Faith fades in your heart.

You 've waled out anither
  Your bridegroom to be;
But can his heart luve sae
  As mine luvit thee?
Ye 'll get biggings and mailins,
  And mony braw claes;
But they a' winna buy back
  The peace o' past days.

Fareweel, and for ever,
  My first luve and last;
May thy joys be to come—
  Mine live in the past.
In sorrow and sadness
  This hour fa's on me;
But light as thy luve may
  It fleet over thee!

THE BLOOM HATH FLED THY CHEEK, MARY.

The bloom hath fled thy cheek, Mary,
  As spring's rath blossoms die;
And sadness hath o'ershadowed now
  Thy once bright eye;
But look! on me the prints of grief
  Still deeper lie.
  Farewell!

Thy lips are pale and mute, Mary;
  Thy step is sad and slow;
The morn of gladness hath gone by
  Thou erst did know;
I, too, am changed like thee, and weep
  For very woe.
  Farewell!

It seems as 't were but yesterday
  We were the happiest twain,
When murmured sighs and joyous tears,
  Dropping like rain,
Discoursed my love, and told how loved
  I was again.
  Farewell!

'T was not in cold and measured phrase
  We gave our passion name;
Scorning such tedious eloquence,
  Our hearts' fond flame
And long-imprisoned feelings fast
  In deep sobs came.
  Farewell!

Would that our love had been the love
  That merest worldlings know,
When passion's draught to our doomed lips
  Turns utter woe,
And our poor dream of happiness
  Vanishes so!
  Farewell!

But in the wreck of all our hopes
  There's yet some touch of bliss,
Since Fate robs not our wretchedness
  Of this last kiss:
Despair, and love, and madness meet
  In this, in this.
  Farewell!

WAE BE TO THE ORDERS.

Oh! wae be to the orders that march'd my luve awa',
And wae be to the cruel cause that gars my tears down fa';
Oh! wae be to the bluidy wars in Hie Germanie,
For they ha'e ta'en my luve, and left a broken heart to me.

The drums beat in the mornin', afore the screich o' day,
And the wee, wee fifes play'd loud and shrill, while yet the morn was gray;
The bonnie flags were a' unfurl'd, a gallant sight to see,
But waes me for my sodger lad that march'd to Germanie.

Oh! lang, lang is travel to the bonnie Pier o' Leith,
Oh! dreich it is to gang on foot wi' snaw-drift in the teeth!
And oh, the cauld wind froze the tear that gather'd in my ee,
When I gaed there to see my luve embark for Germanie.

Digitized by Google

I look'd owre the braid blue sea, sae lang as could be seen
A wee bit sail upon the ship that my sodger lad was in;
But the wind was blawin' sair an' snell, and the ship sail'd speedilie,
And the waves and cruel wars hae twinn'd my winsome luve frae me.

I never think o' dancin', and I downa try to sing,
But a' the day I speir what news kind neibour bodies bring;
I sometimes knit a stocking, if knittin' it may be,
Syne for every loop that I cast on, I 'm sure to let doun three.

My father says I 'm in a pet, my mither jeers at me,
And bans me for a dautit wean, in dorts for aye to be;
But little weet they o' the cause that drumles sae my ee,
Oh! they ha'e nae winsome luve like mine in the wars o' Germanie.

THE BATTLE-FLAG OF SIGURD.

I.

The eagle hearts of all the North
Have left their stormy strand;
The warriors of the world are forth
To choose another land!
Again their long keels sheer the wave,
Their broad sheets court the breeze;
Again the reckless and the brave
Ride lords of weltering seas.
Nor swifter from the well-bent bow
Can feathered shaft be sped,
Than o'er the ocean's flood of snow
Their snorting galleys tread.
Then lift the can to bearded lip,
And smite each sounding shield,
Wassaile! to every dark-ribbed ship,
To every battle-field!
So proudly the Scalds raise their voices of triumph,
As the Northmen ride over the broad-bosomed billow.

II.

Aloft, Sigurdir's battle-flag
Streams onward to the land,
Well may the taint of slaughter lag
On yonder glorious strand.
The waters of the mighty deep,
The wild birds of the sky,
Hear it like vengeance shoreward and sweep,
Where moody men must die.
The waves wax wroth beneath our keel,—
The clouds above us lower,—
They know the battle-sign, and feel
All its resistless power!
Who now uprears Sigurdir's flag,
Nor shuns an early tomb?
Who shoreward through the swelling surge
Shall bear the scroll of doom?
So shout the Scalds, as the long ships are nearing
The low-lying shores of a beautiful land.

III.

Silent the Self-devoted stood
Beside the massive tree;
His image mirrored in the flood
Was terrible to see!
As leaning on his gleaming axe,
And gazing on the wave,
His fearless soul was churning up
The death-rune of the brave.
Upheaving then his giant form
Upon the brown bark's prow,
And tossing back the yellow storm
Of hair from his broad brow;
The lips of song burst open, and
The words of fire rushed out,
And thundering through that martial crew
Pealed Harald's battle-shout;—
It is Harald the Dauntless that lifteth his great voice,
As the Northmen roll on with the doom-written banner.

IV.

"I bear Sigurdir's battle-flag
Through sunshine or through gloom;
Through swelling surge on bloody strand
I plant the scroll of doom!
On Scandia's lonest bleakest waste,
Beneath the starless sky,
The Shadowy Three like meteors passed,
And bade young Harald die;—
They sang the war-deeds of his sires,
And pointed to their tomb;
They told him that this glory-flag
Was his by right of doom.
Since then, where hath young Harald been,
But where Jarl's son should be?
'Mid war and waves—the combat keen
That raged on land or sea!"
So sings the fierce Harald, the thirster for glory,
As his hand bears aloft the dark, death-laden banner.

V.

"Mine own death's in this clenchèd hand;
I know the noble trust;
These limbs must rot on yonder strand,
These lips must lick its dust;
But shall this dusky standard quail
In the red slaughter-day;
Or shall this heart its purpose fail—
This arm forget to slay?
I trample down such idle doubt;
Harald's high blood hath sprung
From sires whose hands in martial bout
Have ne'er belied their tongue;
Nor keener from their castled rock
Rush eagles on their prey,
Than, panting for the battle-shock,
Young Harald leads the way!"
It is thus that tall Harald, in terrible beauty,
Pours forth his big soul to the joyance of heroes.

Digitized by Google

VI.

"The ship-borne warriors of the North,
The sons of Woden's race,
To battle as to feast go forth,
With stern and changeless face;
And I, the last of a great line,
The Self-devoted, long
To lift on high the Runic sign
Which gives my name to song.
In battle-field young Harald falls
Amid a slaughtered foe,
But backward never bears his flag,
While streams to oceans flow;—
On, on above the crowded dead
This Runic scroll shall flare,
And round it shall the lightnings spread,
From swords that never spare!"
So rush the hero-words from the death-doomed one,
While Scalds harp aloud the renown of his fathers.

VII.

"Flag! from your folds, and fiercely wake
War-music on the wind,
Lest tenderest thoughts should rise to shake
The sternness of my mind;
Brynhilda, maiden meek and fair,
Pale watcher by the sea,
I hear thy wailings on the air,
Thy heart's dirge sung for me:—
In vain thy milk-white hands are wrung
Above the salt-sea foam;
The wave that bears me from thy bower
Shall never bear me home;
Brynhilda! seek another love,
But ne'er wed one like me,
Who, death foredoomèd from above,
Joys in his destiny."
Thus mourned young Harald as he thought on Brynhilda,
While his eyes filled with tears which glittered, but fell not.

VIII.

"On sweeps Sigurdir's battle-flag,
The scourge of far from shore;
It dashes through the seething foam,
But I return no more!
Wedded unto a fatal bride—
Boune for a bloody bed—
And battling for her, side by side,
Young Harald's doom is sped!
In starkest fight, where kemp on kemp
Reel headlong to the grave,
There Harald's axe shall ponderous ring,
There Sigurd's flag shall wave;—
Yes, underneath this standard tall,
Beside this fateful scroll,
Down shall the tower-like prison fall
Of Harald's haughty soul."
So sings the Death-seeker, while nearer and nearer
The fleet of the Northmen bears down to the shore.

IX.

"Green lie those thickly-timbered shores
Fair sloping to the sea;
They're cumbered with the harvest stores
That wave but for the free;
Our sickle is the gleaming sword,
Our garner the broad shield—
Let peasants sow, but still he's lord
Who's master of the field;
Let them come on, the bastard-born,
Each soil-stained churl!—alack!
What gain they but a splitten skull,
A sod for their base back?
They sow for us these goodly lands,
We reap them in our might,
Scorning all title but the brands
That triumph in the fight!"
It was thus the land-winners of old gained their glory,
And gray stones voiced their praise in the bays of far isles.

X.

"The rivers of yon island low
Glance redly in the sun,
But ruddier still they're doomed to glow,
And deeper shall they run;
The torrent of proud life shall swell
Each river to the brim,
And in that spate of blood, how well
The headless corpse will swim!
The smoke of many a shepherd's cot
Curls from each peopled glen:
And, hark! the song of maidens mild,
The shout of joyous men!
But one may hew the oaken-tree,
The other shape the shroud;
As the LANDEYDA o'er the sea
Sweeps like a tempest cloud!"—
So shouteth fierce Harald—so echo the Northmen,
As shoreward their ships like mad steeds are careering.

XI.

"Sigurdir's battle-flag is spread
Abroad to the blue sky,
And spectral visions of the dead
Are trooping grimly by;
The spirit-heralds rush before
Harald's destroying brand,
They hover o'er yon fated shore
And death-devoted band.
Marshal stout Jarls your battle fast!
And fire each beacon height,
Our galleys anchor in the sound,
Our banners heave in sight!
And through the surge and arrowy shower
That rains on this broad shield,
Harald uplifts the sign of power
Which rules the battle-field?"
So cries the Death-doomed on the red strand of slaughter,
While the helmets of heroes like anvils are ringing.

Digitized by Google

XI.

On rolled the Northmen's war, above
The Raven Standard flew,
Nor tide nor tempest ever strove
With vengeance half so true.
'Tis Harald—'tis the Sire bereaved—
Who goads the dread career,
And high amid the flashing storm
The flag of doom doth rear.
"On, on," the tall Death-seeker cries,
"These earth-worms soil our heel,
Their spear-points crash like crisping ice
On ribs of stubborn steel!"
Hurra! hurra! their whirlwinds sweep,
And Harald's fate is sped;
Bear on the flag—he goes to sleep
With the life-scorning dead.
Thus fell the young Harald, as of old fell his sires,
And the bright hall of heroes bade hail to his spirit.

THE SWORD-CHANT OF THORSTEIN RAUDI.

'Tis not the gray hawk's flight
O'er mountain and mere;
'Tis not the fleet hound's course
Tracking the deer;
'Tis not the light hoof-print
Of black steed or gray,
Though sweltering it gallop
A long summer's day;
Which mete forth the lordships
I challenge as mine;
Ha! ha! 'tis the good brand
I clutch in my strong hand,
That can their broad marches
And numbers define.
LAND-GIVER! I kiss thee.

Dull builders of houses,
Base tillers of earth,
Gaping, ask me what lordships
I owned at my birth;
But the pale fools wax mute
When I point with my sword
East, west, north, and south,
Shouting, "There am I lord!"
Wold and waste, town and tower,
Hill, valley, and stream,
Trembling, bow to my sway
In the fierce battle-fray,
When the star that rules Fate is
This falchion's red gleam.
MIGHT-GIVER! I kiss thee.

I've heard great harps sounding,
In brave bower and hall,
I've drank the sweet music
That bright lips let fall,
I've hunted in greenwood,
And heard small birds sing;
But away with this idle
And cold jargoning;
The music I love is
The shout of the brave,
The yell of the dying,
The scream of the flying,
When this arm wields death's sickle,
And garners the grave.
JOY-GIVER! I kiss thee.

Far isles of the ocean
Thy lightning have known,
And wide o'er the mainland
Thy horrors have shone.
Great sword of my father,
Stern joy of his hand,
Thou hast carved his name deep on
The stranger's red strand,
And won him the glory
Of undying song.
Keen cleaver of gay crests,
Sharp piercer of broad breasts,
Grim slayer of heroes,
And scourge of the strong.
FAME-GIVER! I kiss thee.

In a love more abiding
Than that the heart knows
For maiden more lovely
Than summer's first rose,
My heart's knit to thine,
And lives but for thee;
In dreamings of gladness,
Thou'rt dancing with me
Brave measures of madness
In some battle-field,
Where armor is ringing,
And noble blood springing,
And cloven, yawn helmet,
Stout hauberk, and shield.
DEATH-GIVER! I kiss thee.

The smile of a maiden's eye
Soon may depart;
And light is the faith of
Fair woman's heart;
Changeful as light clouds,
And wayward as wind,
Be the passions that govern
Weak woman's mind.
But thy metal's as true
As its polish is bright;
When ills wax in number,
Thy love will not slumber,
But, starlike, burns fiercer,
The darker the night.
HEART-GLADDENER! I kiss thee.

My kindred have perished
By war or by wave—
Now, childless and sireless,
I long for the grave.
When the path of our glory
Is shadowed in death,
With me thou wilt slumber
Below the brown heath;
Thou wilt rest on my bosom,
And with it decay—
While harps shall be ringing,
And Scalds shall be singing
The deeds we have done in
Our old fearless day.
SONG-GIVER! I kiss thee.

Digitized by Google

THE CAVALIER'S SONG.

A STEED! a steed of matchlesse speed,
  A sword of metal keene!
All else to noble heartes is drosse,
  All else on earth is meane.
The neighyinge of the war-horse prowde,
  The rowlinge of the drum,
The clangor of the trumpet lowde,
  Be soundes from heaven that come;
And O! the thundering presse of knightes
  Whenas their war-cryes swell,
May tole from heaven an angel bright,
  And rouse a fiend from hell.

Then mounte! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
  And don your helmes amaine:
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honor, call
  Us to the field againe.
No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
  When the sword-hilt's in our hand,—
Heart whole we'll part, and no whit sighe
  For the fayrest of the land;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
  Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
  And hero-like to die!

THE COVENANTERS' BATTLE-CHANT.

To battle! to battle!
  To slaughter and strife!
For a sad, broken covenant
  We barter poor life.
The great God of Judah
  Shall smite with our hand,
And break down the idols
  That cumber the land.

Uplift every voice
  In prayer, and in song;
Remember the battle
  Is not to the strong;—
Lo, the Ammonites thicken!
  And onward they come,
To the vain noise of trumpet,
  Of cymbal, and drum.

They haste to the onslaught,
  With hagbut and spear;
They lust for a banquet
  That's deathful and dear.
Now horseman and footman
  Sweep down the hill-side;
They come, like fierce Pharaohs,
  To die in their pride!

See, long plume and pennon
  Stream gay in the air!
They are given us for slaughter,
  Shall God's people spare?
Nay, nay; lop them off—
  Friend, father, and son;
All earth is athirst till
  The good work be done.

Brace tight every buckler,
  And lift high the sword!
For biting must blades be
  That fight for the Lord.
Remember, remember,
  How saints' blood was shed,
As free as the rain, and
  Homes desolate made!

Among them!—among them!
  Unburied bones cry:
Avenge us—or, like us,
  Faith's true martyrs die!
Hew, hew down the spoilers!
  Slay on, and spare none;
Then shout forth in gladness,
  Heaven's battle is won!

THEY COME! THE MERRY SUMMER MONTHS.

THEY come! the merry summer months of beauty, song, and flowers;
They come! the gladsome months that bring thick leafiness to bowers.
Up, up, my heart! and walk abroad; fling cark and care aside;
Seek silent hills, or rest thyself where peaceful waters glide;
Or, underneath the shadow vast of patriarchal tree,
Scan through its leaves the cloudless sky in rapt tranquillity.

The grass is soft, its velvet touch is grateful to the hand;
And, like the kiss of maiden love, the breeze is sweet and bland:
The daisy and the buttercup are nodding courteously;
It stirs their blood with kindest love, to bless and welcome thee;
And mark how with thine own thin locks—they now are silvery gray—
That blissful breeze is wantoning and whispering, "Be gay!"

There is no cloud that sails along the ocean of yon sky,
But hath its own winged mariners to give it melody;
Thou seest their glittering fans outspread, all gleaming like red gold;
And hark! with shrill pipe musical, their merry course they hold.
God bless them all, those little ones, who, far above this earth,
Can make a scoff of its mean joys, and vent a nobler mirth!

But soft! mine ear upcaught a sound—from yonder wood it came!
The spirit of the dim green glade did breathe his own glad name:
Yes, it is he! the hermit-bird, that, apart from all his kind,
Slow spells his beads monotonous to the soft western wind;

Digitized by Google

Cuckoo! cuckoo! he sings again—his notes are
void of art;
But simplest strains do soonest sound the deep
founts of the heart.

Good Lord! it is a gracious boon for thought-
crazed wight like me,
To smell again these summer flowers beneath
this summer tree!
To suck once more in every breath their little
souls away,
And feed my fancy with fond dreams of youth's
bright summer day,
When, rushing forth like untamed colt, the reck-
less truant boy
Wandered through greenwoods all day long, a
mighty heart of joy!

I'm sadder now—I have had cause; but O! I'm
proud to think
That each pure joy-fount, loved of yore, I yet
delight to drink;—
Leaf, blossom, blade, hill, valley, stream, the
calm, unclouded sky,
Still mingle music with my dreams, as in the
days gone by.
When summer's loveliness and light fall round
me dark and cold,
I'll bear indeed life's heaviest curse—a heart that
hath waxed old!

A SOLEMN CONCEIT.

Stately trees are growing,
Lusty winds are blowing,
And mighty rivers flowing
On, forever on.
As stately forms were growing,
As lusty spirits blowing,
And as mighty fancies flowing
On, forever on;—
But there has been leave-taking,
Sorrow, and heart-breaking,
And a moan pale Echo's making,
For the gone, forever gone!

Lovely stars are gleaming,
Bearded lights are streaming,
And glorious suns are beaming
On, forever on.
As lovely eyes were gleaming,
As wondrous lights were streaming,
And as glorious minds were beaming
On, forever on;
But there has been soul-sundering,
Wailing, and sad wondering;
For graves grow fat with plundering
The gone, forever gone!

We see great eagles soaring,
We hear deep oceans roaring,
And sparkling fountains pouring
On, forever on.
As lofty minds were soaring,
As sonorous voices roaring,
And as sparkling wits were pouring
On, forever on;
But pinions have been shedding,
And voiceless darkness spreading,
Since a measure Death's been treading
O'er the gone, forever gone!

Everything is sundering,
Every one is wondering,
And this huge globe goes thundering
On, forever on;
But 'mid this weary sundering,
Heart-breaking, and sad wondering
And this huge globe's rude thundering
On, forever on,
I would that I were dreaming
Where little flowers are gleaming,
And the long green grass is streaming
O'er the gone, forever gone!

A MONODY.

I.

Hour after hour,
Day after day,
Some gentle flower
Or leaf gives way
Within the bower
Of human hearts;
Tear after tear
In anguish starts,
For, green or sere,
Some loved leaf parts
From the arbére
Of human hearts;—
The keen winds blow;
Rain, hail, and snow
Fall everywhere!
And one by one,
As life's sands run,
These loved things fare,
Till plundered hearts at last are won
To woo despair.

II.

Why linger on,
Fate's mockery here,
When each is gone,
Heart-loved, heart-dear?
Stone spells to stone
Its weary tale,
How graves were filled,
How cheeks waxed pale,
How hearts were chilled
With biting gale,
And life's strings thrilled
With sorrow's wail.
Flower follows flower
In the heart's bower,
To fleet away;
While leaf on leaf,
Sharp grief on grief,
Night chasing day,
Tell as they fall, all joy is brief,
Life but decay.

III.

The sea-weed thrown
By wave or wind

Digitized by Google

On strand unknown,
Lone grave to find,
Methinks may own
Of kindred more
Than I dare claim.
On life's bleak shore
Name follows name
For evermore,
As swift waves shame
Slow waves before;—
For keen winds blow;
Rain, hail, and snow
Fall everywhere,
Till life's sad tree,
In mockery,
Skeletoned bare
Of every leaf, is left to be
Mate of despair.

IV.

The world is wide,
Is rich and fair,
Its things of pride
Flaunt everywhere;
But can it hide
Its hollowness?
One mighty shell
Of bitterness,
One grand farewell
To happiness,
One solemn knell
To love's caress
It seems to me.
The shipless sea
Hath bravery more
Than this waste scene,
Where what hath been
Beloved of yore,
In the heart's bower so fresh and green,
Fades evermore!

V.

From all its kind,
This wasted heart,
This moody mind,
Now drifts apart!
It longs to find
The tideless shore,
Where rests the wreck
Of Heretofore,—
The glorious wreck
Of mental ore;
The great heartbreak
Of loves no more.
I drift alone,
For all are gone
Dearest to me;
And hail the wave
That to the grave
On hurrieth me:
Welcome, thrice welcome, then, thy wave,
Eternity!

WHEN I BENEATH THE COLD, RED EARTH AM SLEEPING.

When I beneath the cold, red earth am sleeping,
Life's fever o'er,
Will there for me be any bright eye weeping
That I'm no more?
Will there be any heart still memory keeping
Of heretofore?

When the great winds, through leafless forests rushing,
Like full hearts break—
When the swoll'n streams, o'er crag and gully gushing,
Sad music make—
Will there be one, whose heart despair is crushing,
Mourn for my sake?

When the bright sun upon that spot is shining
With purest ray,
And the small flowers, their buds and blossoms twining,
Burst through that clay—
Will there be one still on that spot repining
Lost hopes all day?

When the night shadows, with the ample sweeping
Of her dark pall,
The world and all its manifold creation sleeping—
The great and small—
Will there be one, even at that dread hour, weeping
For me—for all?

When no star twinkles with its eye of glory
On that low mound,
And wintry storms have with their ruins hoary
Its loneness crowned,
Will there be then one versed in misery's story
Pacing it round?

It may be so—but this is selfish sorrow
To ask such meed—
A weakness and a wickedness, to borrow
From hearts that bleed
The wailings of to-day, for what to-morrow
Shall never need.

Lay me then gently in my narrow dwelling,
Thou gentle heart!
And, though thy bosom should with grief be swelling,
Let no tear start;
It were in vain—for time hath long been knelling—
Sad one, depart!

Digitized by Google

THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY.

THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY was born near Bath, October 13, 1797—on the same day with Motherwell. He studied at Oxford, intending to take orders; but by the death of his father, a solicitor, he inherited a fortune, and he gave up his purpose of entering the church. He had a talent for song-writing, and became a favorite in fashionable society. After the loss of his fortune in 1831 this talent was used as a means of support; but adversity was not so favorable to the production of his summer-day songs as prosperity had been, and he became disheartened, and died, April 22, 1839. He was the author of several novels of no great merit, thirty-six dramas, and hundreds of songs. Many of the latter—notably "I'd be a Butterfly," "Oh no, we never mention Her," "Isle of Beauty, Fare Thee Well," and "We met, 'twas in a Crowd"—enjoyed an immense popularity. Some of them were set to music by himself, and some by Sir Henry Bishop. He published "Melodies of Various Nations," "Parliamentary Letters and other Poems," and "Deeds of Witchery," which was also a volume of poems. After his death his widow published a collected edition of his poems, in two volumes, with a biographical sketch. He was a genial, amiable man, rather delicate physically, with no great force of character.

THE FIRST GRAY HAIR.

THE matron at her mirror,
  With her hand upon her brow,
Sits gazing on her lovely face—
  Ay, lovely even now;
Why doth she lean upon her hand
  With such a look of care?
Why steals that tear across her cheek?
  She sees her first gray hair.

Time from her form hath ta'en away
  But little of its grace;
His touch of thought hath dignified
  The beauty of her face;
Yet she might mingle in the dance,
  Where maidens gayly trip,
So bright is still her hazel eye,
  So beautiful her lip.

The faded form is often marked
  By sorrow more than years—
The wrinkle on the cheek may be
  The course of secret tears;
The mournful lip may murmur of
  A love it ne'er confessed,
And the dimness of the eye betray
  A heart that cannot rest.

But she hath been a happy wife:
  The lover of her youth
May proudly claim the smile that pays
  The trial of his truth;
A sense of slight—of loneliness—
  Hath never banished sleep:
Her life hath been a cloudless one;
  Then wherefore doth she weep?

She looked upon her raven locks,
  What thoughts did they recall?
Oh! not of nights when they were decked
  For banquet or for ball;
They brought back thoughts of early youth,
  Ere she had learned to check,
With artificial wreaths, the curls
  That sported o'er her neck.

She seemed to feel her mother's hand
  Pass lightly through her hair,
And draw it from her brow, to leave
  A kiss of kindness there;
She seemed to view her father's smile,
  And feel the playful touch
That sometimes feigned to steal away
  The curls she prized so much.

And now she sees her first gray hair!
  Oh, deem it not a crime
For her to weep, when she beholds
  The first footmark of Time!
She knows that, one by one, those mute
  Mementos will increase,
And steal youth, beauty, strength, away,
  Till life itself shall cease.

'Tis not the tear of vanity
  For beauty on the wane;
Yet, though the blossom may not sigh,
  To bud and bloom again—
It cannot but remember,
  With a feeling of regret,
The spring forever gone—
  The summer sun so nearly set.

Digitized by Google

Ah, lady! heed the monitor!
Thy mirror tells thee truth;
Assume the matron's folded veil,
Resign the wreath of youth:
Go! bind it on thy daughter's brow,
In her thou'lt still look fair—
'Twere well would all learn wisdom who
Behold the first gray hair!

THE WEARY WATCHER.

'Tis not the hour her lover named,
Yet she already deems him late;
And pouts her lip, as if ashamed
That mortal man should make her wait.

She counts the minutes o'er and o'er,
Yet seems unconscious of their flight;
And she will watch the path no more
Where first his form will be in sight.

And were she summoned by his voice,
She would not turn her head to greet him;
Come when he may, she will rejoice
To show how coldly she can meet him!

She will not frown, for frowns would say
That she had watched for his return;
She will not smile—it would betray
She saw him not with unconcern.

Oh! should he ever come, no trace
Of weak emotion shall appear;
She'll seem, while gazing on his face,
Unconscious that he stands so near.

No blush shall mantle on her cheek,
No tear shall tremble in her eye;
To some young stranger she will speak,
And seem engrossed by his reply.

And thinking thus, she proudly leans
Against the marble balustrade:
Come when he may, *she* never means
To raise her eyes, or turn her head!

Lady, most beautiful thou art,
And pride becomes thee 'mid the crowd:
But oh! with him who wins thy heart,
Thou'rt fond—weak—any thing but proud.

Resentment when he leaves her side,
Betrays the depth of woman's love;
And when she prattles of her pride,
What but her weakness does she prove?

Why starts she now? why turns her head
With such a glance of gay delight?
Alas! forgetting all she said,
She smiles the moment he's in sight!

The weary watcher can command
No word to wound, no frown to chill;
The silent pressure of her hand
Assures him he is welcome still.

THE FORSAKEN TO THE FALSE ONE.

I DARE thee to forget me!
Go wander where thou wilt;
Thy hand upon the vessel's helm,
Or on the sabre's hilt;
Away! thou'rt free! o'er land and sea
Go rush to danger's brink!
But oh, thou canst not fly from thought!
Thy curse will be—*to think!*

Remember me! remember all,
My long-enduring love,
That linked itself to perfidy;
The vulture and the dove!
Remember in thy utmost need,
I never once did shrink,
But clung to thee confidingly;
Thy curse shall be—*to think!*

Then go! that thought will render thee
A dastard in the fight;
That thought, when thou art tempest-tossed,
Will fill thee with affright!
In some wild dungeon mayst thou lie,
And, counting each cold link
That binds thee to captivity,
Thy curse shall be—*to think!*

Go seek the merry banquet-hall,
Where younger maidens bloom,
The thought of me shall make thee there
Endure a deeper gloom;
That thought shall turn the festive cup
To poison while you drink,
And while false smiles are on thy cheek,
Thy curse will be—*to think!*

Forget me, false one! hope it not!
When minstrels touch the string—
The memory of other days
Will gall thee while they sing:
The airs I used to love will make
Thy coward conscience shrink,
Ay, every note will have its sting—
Thy curse will be—*to think!*

Forget me! No, that shall not be!
I'll haunt thee in thy sleep,
In dreams thou'lt cling to slimy rocks
That overhang the deep;
Thou'lt shriek for aid! my feeble arm
Shall hurl thee from the brink,
And when thou wak'st in wild dismay,
Thy curse will be—*to think!*

THE PILOT.

OH, pilot! 'tis a fearful night,
There's danger on the deep,
I'll come and pace the deck with thee,
I do not dare to sleep.
Go down! the sailor cried, go down,
This is no place for thee,
Fear not; but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou mayst be.

Digitized by Google

Ah! pilot, dangers often met,
We all are apt to slight,
And thou hast known these raging waves
But to subdue their might.
It is not apathy, he cried,
That gives this strength to me;
Fear not; but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou mayst be.

On such a night the sea engulfed
My father's lifeless form;
My only brother's boat went down
In just so wild a storm.
And such, perhaps, may be my fate,
But still, I say to thee
Fear not; but trust in Providence,
Wherever thou mayst be.

ISLE OF BEAUTY, FARE THEE WELL!

Shades of evening, close not o'er us,
Leave our lonely bark a while!
Morn, alas! will not restore us
Yonder dim and distant isle;
Still my fancy can discover
Sunny spots where friends may dwell;
Darker shadows round us hover,
Isle of Beauty, fare thee well!

'Tis the hour when happy faces
Smile around the taper's light;
Who will fill our vacant places?
Who will sing our songs to-night?
Through the mist that floats above us,
Faintly sounds the vesper bell,
Like a voice from those who love us,
Breathing, fondly, fare thee well!

When the waves are round me breaking,
As I pace the deck alone,
And my eye in vain is seeking
Some green leaf to rest upon;
What would not I give to wander
Where my old companions dwell?
Absence makes the heart grow fonder,
Isle of Beauty, fare thee well!

I'D BE A BUTTERFLY.

I'd be a butterfly born in a bower,
Where roses and lilies and violets meet;
Roving forever from flower to flower,
Kissing all buds that are pretty and sweet.
I'd never languish for wealth or for power,
I'd never sigh to see slaves at my feet:
I'd be a butterfly born in a bower,
Kissing all buds that are pretty and sweet.

Oh! could I pilfer the wand of a fairy,
I'd have a pair of those beautiful wings.
Their summer-day's ramble is sportive and airy,
They sleep in a rose when the nightingale sings.
Those who have wealth must be watchful and wary,
Power, alas! naught but misery brings:
I'd be a butterfly, sportive and airy,
Rocked in a rose when the nightingale sings.

What though you tell me each gay little rover
Shrinks from the breath of the first autumn day;
Surely 'tis better, when summer is over,
To die, when all fair things are fading away.
Some in life's winter may toil to discover
Means of procuring a weary delay:
I'd be a butterfly, living a rover,
Dying when fair things are fading away.

THE SOLDIER'S TEAR.

Upon the hill he turned
To take a last fond look,
Of the valley and the village church
And the cottage by the brook;
He listened to the sounds,
So familiar to his ear,
And the soldier leaned upon his sword
And wiped away a tear.

Beside that cottage porch
A girl was on her knees,
She held aloft a snowy scarf,
Which fluttered in the breeze;
She breathed a prayer for him,
A prayer he could not hear,
But he paused to bless her, as she knelt,
And wiped away a tear.

He turned and left the spot,
Oh, do not deem him weak;
For dauntless was the soldier's heart,
Though tears were on his cheek;
Go watch the foremost rank
In danger's dark career,
Be sure the hand most daring there
Has wiped away a tear.

LONG, LONG AGO.

Tell me the tales that to me were so dear,
Long, long ago—long, long ago;
Sing me the songs I delighted to hear,
Long, long ago—long ago.
Now you are come, all my grief is removed,
Let me forget that so long you have roved,
Let me believe that you love as you loved,
Long, long ago—long ago.

Do you remember the path where we met,
Long, long ago—long, long ago?
Ah, yes; you told me you ne'er would forget,
Long, long ago—long ago.
Then to all others my smile you preferred,
Love when you spoke gave a charm to each word,
Still my heart treasures the praises I heard,
Long, long ago—long ago.

Though by your kindness my fond hopes were raised,
Long, long ago—long, long ago;
You by more eloquent lips have been praised,

Digitized by Google

Long, long ago—long ago.
But by long absence your truth has been tried,
Still to your accents I listen with pride,
Blest as I was when I sat by your side,
Long, long ago—long ago.

OH, NO! WE NEVER MENTION HER.

Oh, no! we never mention her;
Her name is never heard;
My lips are now forbid to speak
That once familiar word.
From sport to sport they hurry me,
To banish my regret;
And when they win a smile from me,
They think that I forget.

They bid me seek in change of scene
The charms that others see;
But were I in a foreign land,
They'd find no change in me.
'Tis true that I behold no more
The valley where we met;
I do not see the hawthorn-tree—
But how can I forget!

They tell me she is happy now—
The gayest of the gay;
They hint that she forgets me now,
But heed not what they say;
Like me perhaps she struggles with
Each feeling of regret;
But if she loves, as I have loved,
She never can forget.

WELCOME ME HOME.

Gayly the Troubadour
Touched his guitar,
When he was hastening
Home from the war;
Singing, "From Palestine
Hither I come;
Ladye love! ladye love!
Welcome me home."

She for the Troubadour
Hopelessly wept,
Sadly she thought of him
When others slept:
Singing, "In search of thee
Would I might roam;
Troubadour! Troubadour!
Come to thy home."

Hark! 'twas the Troubadour
Breathing her name,
Under the battlement
Softly he came,
Singing, "From Palestine
Hither I come;
Ladye love! ladye love!
Welcome me home."

I'M SADDEST WHEN I SING.

You think I have a merry heart,
Because my songs are gay;
But, oh! they all were taught to me
By friends now far away;
The bird retains his silver note,
Though bondage chains his wing;
His song is not a happy one—
I'm saddest when I sing!

I heard them first in that sweet home
I never more shall see,
And now each song of joy has got
A plaintive turn for me!
Alas! 'tis vain in winter-time
To mock the songs of spring,
Each note recalls some withered leaf—
I'm saddest when I sing!

Of all the friends I used to love,
My harp remains alone,
Its faithful voice still seems to be
An echo of my own:
My tears when I bend over it,
Will fall upon its string,
Yet those who hear me, little think
I'm saddest when I sing!

THE ROSE THAT ALL ARE PRAISING.

The rose that all are praising,
Is not the rose for me;
Too many eyes are gazing
Upon the costly tree;
But there's a rose in yonder glen,
That shuns the gaze of other men,
For me its blossom raising—
Oh! that's the rose for me.

The gem a king might covet,
Is not the gem for me;
From darkness who would move it,
Save that the world may see?
But I've a gem that shuns display,
And next my heart worn every day,
So dearly do I love it—
Oh! that's the gem for me.

Gay birds in cages pining,
Are not the birds for me;
Those plumes so brightly shining,
Would fain fly off from thee:
But I've a bird that gayly sings;
Though free to rove, she folds her wings,
For me her flight resigning—
Oh! that's the bird for me.

THE DESERT ISLE.

Another day is closing,
And there's no sail in sight,
I dread the coming shadows
Of hopeless, sleepless night;

Digitized by Google

No wife will watch my slumbers,
  No friend my name will bless,
No children throng around me,
  To sue for a caress.

When darkness veils the ocean,
  I kindle yonder pile;
But no eye marks the beacon,
  No stranger seeks the isle.
Alas! my weak hand trembles,
  When thus I try once more,
That chance of preservation
  Which failed so oft before.

Yet once again it blazes,
  Reflected in the deep,
Ah! would those flames could waken
  My loved ones where they sleep;
But 'twill not guide them hither,
  My beacon burns in vain,
And I shall never listen
  To words of love again.

OF WHAT IS THE OLD MAN THINKING?

Of what is the old man thinking,
  As he leans on his oaken staff?
From the May-day pastime shrinking,
  He shares not the merry laugh.
But the tears of the old man flow,
  As he looks on the young and gay;
And his gray head, moving slow,
  Keeps time to the air they play.
The elders around are drinking,
  But not one cup will he quaff;
Oh, of what is the old man thinking,
  As he leans on his oaken staff?

'Tis not with a vain repining
  That the old man sheds a tear,
'Tis not for his strength declining—
  He sighs not to linger here.
There's a spell in the air they play,
  And the old man's eyes are dim,
For it calls up a past May-day,
  And the dear friends lost to him.
From the scene before him shrinking,
  From the dance and the merry laugh,
Of their calm repose he is thinking,
  As he leans on his oaken staff.

SING ME A MELODY.

Oh! sing me a melody—sing
  Some song that of old was your choice;
Sad thoughts from my heart will take wing,
  When I hear the loved tone of your voice.
I shall seem to be born again
  To the place where I heard you sing last;
And my present endurance of pain
  Will be lulled in a dream of the past.

Though absent from you, I have thought
  It would cheer me to hear it again;
But when others have sung it, I sought
  For the charm it once boasted, in vain;
Any voice in the world but your own
  Must disturb recollections so sweet;
If we part, love, believe me, that none
  Shall sing it again till we meet.

SHE WORE A WREATH OF ROSES.

She wore a wreath of roses
  The night that first we met,
Her lovely face was smiling
  Beneath her curls of jet;
Her footstep had the lightness,
  Her voice the joyous tone,
The tokens of a youthful heart,
  Where sorrow is unknown;
I saw her but a moment—
  Yet, methinks, I see her now,
With the wreath of summer flowers
  Upon her snowy brow.

A wreath of orange-blossoms,
  When next we met she wore;
Th' expression of her features
  Was more thoughtful than before;
And standing by her side was one
  Who strove, and not in vain,
To soothe her, leaving that dear home
  She ne'er might view again.
I saw her but a moment—
  Yet, methinks, I see her now,
With the wreath of orange-blossoms
  Upon her snowy brow.

And once again I see that brow,
  No bridal wreath is there,
The widow's sombre cap conceals
  Her once luxuriant hair;
She weeps in silent solitude,
  And there is no one near
To press her hand within his own,
  And wipe away the tear.
I see her broken-hearted!
  Yet, methinks, I see her now
In the pride of youth and beauty,
  With a garland on her brow.

OH! FROM A MOTHER'S EYE.

Oh! from a mother's eye
  To veil a secret error,
From love's approach to fly,
  And hide with panting terror;
To shrink from words of praise,
  Though breathed by fond affection,
And through long, weary days,
  To tremble at detection,
    This is the depth of woe,
    Which guilt alone can know.

To cheer a mother's breast,
  When fortune frowns upon her,
To soothe her grief to rest,
  And seek when others shun her;

Digitized by Google

Her sad and secret fear,
With words of hope beguiling,
To chase away the tear,
And smile to see her smiling;
Oh! this is a transport known
To innocence alone.

WE MET.

We met—'twas in a crowd—
And I thought he would shun me;
He came—I could not breathe,
For his eye was upon me;
He spoke—his words were cold,
And his smile was unaltered;
I knew how much he felt,
For his deep-toned voice faltered.

I wore my bridal robe,
And I rivalled its whiteness;
Bright gems were in my hair—
How I hated their brightness!
He called me by my name,
As the bride of another—
Oh, thou hast been the cause
Of this anguish, my mother!

And once again we met—
And a fair girl was near him;
He smiled and whispered low—
As I once used to hear him;
She leaned upon his arm—
Once 'twas mine, and mine only;
I wept, for I deserved
To feel wretched and lonely.

And she will be his bride!
At the altar he'll give her
The love that was too pure
For a heartless deceiver;
The world may think me gay,
For my feelings I smother—
Oh, thou hast been the cause
Of this anguish, my mother!

DECK NOT WITH GEMS.

Deck not with gems that lovely form for me,
They in my eyes can add no charm to thee.
Braid not for me the tresses of thy hair;
I must have loved thee hadst thou not been fair.

How oft, when half in tears, hast thou beguiled
The sorrow from my heart, and I have smiled.
Oh! formed alike my tears and smiles to share,
I must have loved thee hadst thou not been fair.

Time on that cheek his withering hand may press,
He may do all but make me love thee less;
The mind defies him, and thy charm lies there,
I must have loved thee hadst thou not been fair.

WHY DON'T THE MEN PROPOSE?

Why don't the men propose, mamma?
Why don't the men propose?
Each seems just coming to the point,
And then away he goes!
It is no fault of yours, mamma,
That everybody knows;
You *fête* the finest men in town,
Yet, oh! they won't propose!

I'm sure I've done my best, mamma,
To make a proper match;
For coronets and eldest sons
I'm ever on the watch;
I've hopes when some *distingué* beau
A glance upon me throws;
But though he'll dance, and smile, and flirt,
Alas! he won't propose!

I've tried to win by languishing
And dressing like a blue;
I've bought big books, and talked of them
As if I'd read them through!
With hair cropped like a man, I've felt
The heads of all the beaux;
But Spurzheim could not touch their *hearts*,
And oh! they won't propose!

I threw aside the books, and thought
That ignorance was bliss;
I felt convinced that men preferred
A simple sort of miss;
And so I lisped out naught beyond
Plain "yeses" or plain "noes,"
And wore a sweet, unmeaning smile;
Yet, oh! they won't propose!

Last night, at Lady Ramble's rout,
I heard Sir Harry Gale
Exclaim, "Now I *propose* again;"
I started, turning pale;
I really thought my time was come,
I blushed like any rose;
But oh! I found 'twas only at
Ecarté he'd *propose!*

And what is to be done, mamma?
Oh! what is to be done?
I really have no time to lose,
For I am thirty-one:
At balls I am too often left
Where spinsters sit in rows;
Why won't the men propose, mamma?
Why *won't* the men propose?

Digitized by Google

DAVID MACBETH MOIR.

David Macbeth Moir was born at Musselburgh, Scotland, January 5, 1798. He was educated in the grammar-school of his native town, studied medicine in the University of Edinburgh, and in his eighteenth year received a surgeon's diploma. He entered upon medical practice in Musselburgh, and continued it all his life.

Moir had written poetry at the age of fourteen, and in 1816 he published a poem entitled "The Bombardment of Algiers." He was a frequent contributor to "Constable's Edinburgh Magazine," and became a regular contributor to "Blackwood" soon after its establishment, signing his poems with the Greek letter Δ, whence he became popularly known as Delta. In 1824 he published "The Legend of Genevieve, with other Tales and Poems," and in 1843 another volume of poems entitled "Domestic Verses." In 1851 he delivered in Edinburgh six lectures on "Poetical Literature of the past Half-Century," which were subsequently published in a volume. He also wrote in prose "The Autobiography of Mansie Waugh," originally published in "Blackwood," and was the author of several medical works.

Dr. Moir died at Dumfries, where he had gone to rest from overwork, July 6, 1851, leaving a widow and eight children. He was tall, with a florid complexion and a serious cast of countenance; a diligent and methodical worker, simple and kindly in all his ways. His best known poem is the elegy on a child who had given himself the name of "Casa Wappy." A collected edition of Moir's poems in two volumes, edited with a memoir by Thomas Aird, was published posthumously.

CASA WAPPY.

And hast thou sought thy heavenly home,
Our fond, dear boy—
The realms where sorrow dare not come,
Where life is joy?
Pure at thy death, as at thy birth,
Thy spirit caught no taint from earth;
Even by its bliss we mete our dearth,
Casa Wappy!

Despair was in our last farewell,
As closed thine eye;
Tears of our anguish may not tell
When thou didst die;
Words may not paint our grief for thee;
Sighs are but bubbles on the sea
Of our unfathomed agony;
Casa Wappy!

Thou wert a vision of delight,
To bless us given;
Beauty embodied to our sight—
A type of heaven!
So dear to us thou wert, thou art
Even less thine own self, than a part
Of mine, and of thy mother's heart,
Casa Wappy!

Thy bright, brief day knew no decline—
'Twas cloudless joy;
Sunrise and night alone were thine,
Beloved boy!
This moon beheld thee blithe and gay;
That found thee prostrate in decay;
And ere a third shone, clay was clay,
Casa Wappy!

Gem of our hearth, our household pride,
Earth's undefiled,
Could love have saved, thou hadst not died,
Our dear, sweet child!
Humbly we bow to Fate's decree;
Yet had we hoped that Time should see
Thee mourn for us, not us for thee,
Casa Wappy!

Do what I may, go where I will,
Thou meet'st my sight;
There dost thou glide before me still—
A form of light!
I feel thy breath upon my cheek—
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak—
Till oh! my heart is like to break,
Casa Wappy!

Methinks thou smil'st before me now,
With glance of stealth;
The hair thrown back from thy full brow
In buoyant health;
I see thine eyes' deep violet light—
Thy dimpled cheek carnationed bright—
Thy clasping arms so round and white—
Casa Wappy!

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat—thy bow—
Thy cloak and bonnet—club and ball;
But where art thou?
A corner holds thine empty chair;
Thy playthings, idly scattered there,
But speak to us of our despair,
Casa Wappy!

Even to the last, thy every word—
To glad—to grieve—

Digitized by Google

Was sweet, as sweetest song of bird
On summer's eve;
In outward beauty undecayed,
Death o'er thy spirit cast no shade,
And, like the rainbow thou didst fade,
Casa Wappy!

We mourn for thee, when blind, blank night
The chamber fills;
We pine for thee, when morn's first light
Reddens the hills;
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea,
All—to the wall-flower and wild-pea—
Are changed; we saw the world through thee,
Casa Wappy!

And though, perchance, a smile may gleam
Of casual mirth,
It doth not own, whate'er may seem,
An inward birth:
We miss thy small step on the stair;—
We miss thee at thine evening prayer;
All day we miss thee—everywhere—
Casa Wappy!

Snows muffled earth when thou didst go,
In life's spring bloom,
Down to the appointed house below—
The silent tomb.
But now the green leaves of the tree,
The cuckoo, and "the busy bee,"
Return—but with them bring not thee,
Casa Wappy!

'Tis so: but can it be—while flowers
Revive again—
Man's doom, in death that we and ours
For aye remain?
Oh! can it be, that, o'er the grave,
The grass renewed should yearly wave,
Yet God forget our child to save?—
Casa Wappy!

It cannot be; for were it so
Thus man could die,
Life were a mockery—thought were woe—
And truth a lie;—
Heaven were a coinage of the brain—
Religion frenzy—virtue vain—
And all our hopes to meet again,
Casa Wappy!

Then be to us, O dear, lost child!
With beam of love,
A star, death's uncongenial wild
Smiling above!
Soon, soon, thy little feet have trod
The skyward path, the seraph's road,
That led thee back from man to God,
Casa Wappy!

Yet, 'tis sweet balm to our despair,
Fond, fairest boy,
That heaven is God's, and thou art there,
With him in joy;
There past are death and all its woes;
There beauty's stream forever flows;
And pleasure's day no sunset knows,
Casa Wappy!

Farewell, then—for a while, farewell—
Pride of my heart!
It cannot be that long we dwell,
Thus torn apart.
Time's shadows like the shuttle flee;
And, dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave, I'll meet with thee,
Casa Wappy!

TIME'S CHANGES.

I saw her once—so freshly fair,
That like a blossom just unfolding,
She opened to life's cloudless air,
And Nature joyed to view its moulding:
Her smile it haunts my memory yet;
Her cheek's fine hue divinely glowing;
Her rosebud mouth, her eyes of jet,
Around on all their light bestowing;
Oh, who could look on such a form,
So nobly free, so softly tender,
And darkly dream that earthly storm
Should dim such sweet, delicious splendor?
For in her mien, and in her face,
And in her young step's fairy lightness,
Naught could the raptured gazer trace
But beauty's glow and pleasure's brightness.

I saw her twice—an altered charm,
But still of magic richest, rarest,
Than girlhood's talisman less warm,
Though yet of earthly sights the fairest;
Upon her breast she held a child,
The very image of its mother,
Which ever to her smiling smiled—
They seemed to live but in each other.
But matron cares of lurking woe
Her thoughtless, sinless look had banished,
And from her cheeks the roseate glow
Of girlhood's balmy morn had vanished;
Within her eyes, upon her brow,
Lay something softer, fonder, deeper,
As if in dreams some visioned woe
Had broke th' Elysium of the sleeper.

I saw her thrice—Fate's dark decree
In widow's garments had arrayed her;
Yet beautiful she seemed to be
As even my reveries portrayed her;
The glow, the glance, had passed away,
The sunshine and the sparkling glitter—
Still, though I noted pale decay,
The retrospect was scarcely bitter;
For, in their place a calmness dwelt,
Serene, subduing, soothing, holy—
In feeling which, the bosom felt
That every louder mirth is folly—
A pensiveness, which is not grief;
A stillness as of sunset streaming;
A fairy glow on flower and leaf,
Till earth looks like a landscape dreaming.

A last time—and unmoved she lay,
Beyond life's dim, uncertain river,
A glorious mould of fading clay,
From whence the spark had fled forever!
I gazed—my heart was like to burst—
And, as I thought of years departed—

Digitized by Google

The years wherein I saw her first,
When she, a girl, was lightsome-hearted—
And as I mused on later days,
When moved she in her matron duty,
A happy mother, in the blaze
Of ripened fruit and sunny beauty—
I felt the chill—I turned aside—
Bleak Desolation's cloud came o'er me;
And Being seemed a troubled tide,
Whose wrecks in darkness swam before me!

LANGSYNE.

Langsyne!—how doth the word come back
With magic meaning to the heart,
As memory roams the sunny track
From which hope's dreams were loath to part!
No joy like by-past joy appears;
For what is gone we fret and pine—
Were life spun out a thousand years,
It could not match Langsyne!

Langsyne!—the days of childhood warm,
When, tottering by a mother's knee,
Each sight and sound had power to charm,
And hope was high, and thought was free.
Langsyne!—the merry schoolboy days—
How sweetly then life's sun did shine!
Oh, for the glorious pranks and plays,
The raptures of Langsyne!

Langsyne!—yes, in the sound I hear
The rustling of the summer grove,
And view those angel features near
Which first awoke the heart to love.
How sweet it is, in pensive mood,
At windless midnight to recline,
And fill the mental solitude
With spectres from Langsyne!

Langsyne!—ah, where are they who shared
With us its pleasures bright and blithe?
Kindly with some hath fortune fared;
And some have bowed beneath the scythe
Of Death; while others, scattered far
O'er foreign lands, at fate repine,
Oft wandering forth, 'neath twilight's star,
To muse on dear Langsyne.

Langsyne!—the heart can never be
Again so full of guileless truth;
Langsyne!—the eyes no more shall see—
Ah, no! the rainbow hopes of youth.
Langsyne, with thee resides a spell
To raise the spirit and refine.
Farewell!—there can be no farewell
To thee, loved, lost Langsyne!

THE ABSENT LOVER.

Summer was on the hills when last we parted,
Flowers in the vale, and beauty on the sky,
Our hearts were true, although our hopes were thwarted;
Forward, with wistful eye,
Scarce half-resigned we looked, yet thought how sweet
'Twould be again in after-months to meet.
And months have passed: now the bright moon is shining
O'er the gray mountains and the stilly sea,
As, by the streamlet's willowy bend reclining,
I pause, remembering thee,
Who to the moonlight lent a softer charm,
As through these wilds we wandered arm in arm!

Yes! as we roamed, the sylvan earth seemed glowing
With many a beauty unremarked before:
The soul was like a deep urn overflowing
With thoughts a treasured store;
The very flowers seemed born but to exhale,
As breathed the West, their fragrance to the gale.
Methinks I see thee yet—thy form of lightness,
An angel phantom gliding through the trees,
Thine alabaster brow, thy cheek of brightness,
Thy tresses in the breeze
Floating their auburn, and thine eyes that made,
So rich their blue, heaven's azure like a shade.

Methinks even yet I feel thy timid fingers,
With their bland pressure thrilling bliss to mine.
Methinks yet on my cheek thy breathing lingers
As, fondly leant to thine,
I told how life all pleasureless would be,
Green palm-tree of earth's desert, wanting thee.
Not yet, not yet, had disappointment shrouded
Youth's summer calms with storms of wintry strife;
The star of hope shone o'er our path unclouded,
And fancy colored life
With those Elysian rainbow-hues, which Truth
Melts with his rod, when disenchanting youth.

Where art thou now? I look around, but see not
The features and the form that haunt my dreams!
Where art thou now? I listen, but for me not
The deep, rich music streams
Of that entrancing voice, which could bestow
A zest to pleasure, and a balm to woe:—
I miss thy smile, when morn's first light is bursting
Through the green branches of the casement-tree;
To list thy voice my lonely ear is thirsting,
Beside the moonlight sea:
Vain are my longings, my repinings vain;
Sleep only gives thee to my arms again.

Yet should it cheer me, that nor woe hath shattered
The ties that link our hearts, nor hate, nor wrath,
And soon the day may dawn, when shall be scattered
All shadows from our path;
And visions be fulfilled, by hope adored,
In thee, the long-lost, to mine arms restored.
Ah! could I see thee!—see thee, were it only
But for a moment looking bliss to me!

Digitized by Google

Ah! could I hear thee!—desolate and lonely
Is life deprived of thee:
I start from out my reverie, to know
That hills between us rise, and rivers flow!

Let Fortune change—be fickle Fate preparing
To shower her arrows, or to shed her balm,
All that I ask for, pray for, is the sharing
With thee life's storm or calm:
For, ah! with others wealth and mirth would be
Less sweet by far than sorrow shared with thee!
Yes! vainly, foolishly, the vulgar reckon
That happiness resides in outward shows:
Contentment from the lowliest cot may beckon
True love to sweet repose:
For genuine bliss can ne'er be far apart,
When soul meets soul, and heart responds to heart.

Farewell! let tyrannous Time roll on, estranging
The eyes and heart from each familiar spot:
Be fickle friendships with the seasons changing,
So that thou changest not!
I would not that the love, which owes its birth
To Heaven, should perish like the things of earth!—
Adieu! as falls the flooding moonlight round me,
Fall Heaven's best joys on thy beloved head!
May cares that harass, and may griefs that wound me,
Flee from thy path and bed!
Be every thought that stirs, and hour that flies,
Sweet as thy smile, and radiant as thine eyes!

FAREWELL, OUR FATHERS' LAND.

Farewell, our fathers' land,
Valley and fountain!
Farewell, old Scotland's strand,
Forest and mountain!
Then hush the drum and hush the flute,
And be the stirring bagpipe mute—
Such sounds may not with sorrow suit—
And fare thee well, Lochaber!

This plume and plaid no more will see,
Nor philabeg, nor dirk at knee,
Nor even the broadswords which Dundee
Bade flash at Killiecrankie.
Farewell, our fathers' land, etc.

Now when of yore, on bank and brae,
Our loyal clansmen marshaled gay;
Far downward scowls Ben Nevis gray,
On sheep-walks spreading lonely.
Farewell, our fathers' land, etc.

For now we cross the stormy sea,
Ah! never more to look on thee,
Nor on thy dun deer, bounding free,
From Etive glens to Morven.
Farewell, our fathers' land, etc.

Thy mountain air no more we'll breathe;
The household sword shall eat the sheath,
While rave the wild winds o'er the heath
Where our gray sires are sleeping.
Then farewell, our fathers' land, etc.

MARY DHU.

Sweet, sweet is the rose-bud
Bathed in dew;
But sweeter art thou,
My Mary Dhu.
Oh! the skies of night,
With their eyes of light,
Are not so bright
As my Mary Dhu.
Whenever thy radiant face I see,
The clouds of sorrow depart from me:
As the shadows fly
From day's bright eye,
Thou lightest life's sky,
My Mary Dhu.

Sad, sad is my heart,
When I sigh, adieu!
Or gaze on thy parting,
My Mary Dhu!
Then for thee I mourn,
Till thy steps' return
Bids my bosom burn—
My Mary Dhu.
I think but of thee on the broom-clad hills,
I muse but on thee by the moorland rills.
In the morning light,
In the moonshine bright,
Thou art still in my sight,
My Mary Dhu.

Thy voice trembles through me
Like the breeze,
That ruffles, in gladness,
The leafy trees;
'Tis a wafted tone
From Heaven's high throne,
Making hearts thine own,
My Mary Dhu.
Be the flowers of joy ever round thy feet,
With colors glowing, and incense sweet;
And when thou must away,
May life's rose decay
In the west wind's sway—
My Mary Dhu!

Digitized by Google

THOMAS HOOD.

THOMAS HOOD was born in London, May 23, 1798. His father was a bookseller, a man of considerable culture, and had written two novels. Thomas was instructed by a "decayed dominie" who discovered the boy's talent and encouraged him to cultivate it. Under the direction of this master, he prepared for the press a revised edition of "Paul and Virginia," the first literary work for which he received any pay.

He was placed in the counting-house of a Russian merchant; but his health failed, and he went to Scotland to recover it. On returning, he learned engraving from his uncle, and in 1821 he became sub-editor of the *London Magazine*. This brought him into the society of Lamb, Talfourd, De Quincey, Procter, and other literary men of the day.

He had written poetry at an early age, elaborating his verses with great care, and often putting them into printed characters in order to judge the better how they would stand the test of print. His first publication was "Odes and Addresses to Great People," written in conjunction with his brother-in-law, J. H. Reynolds. In 1826 Hood published the first series of "Whims and Oddities." In 1829 he began the "Comic Annual," which was continued nine years. In 1831 he removed to Wanstead, in Essex, where he resided four years, and where he wrote his novel "Tylney Hall." These were the most prosperous years of his life. But pecuniary misfortune overtook him, and he returned to London in 1835, where three years later he began the publication of *Hood's Own*.

His health failed again, and he went to the Continent, where he remained several years, writing there his "Up the Rhine." On his return he became editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, to which he contributed the "Whimsicalities," which were published in book-form in 1843. In 1844 he started *Hood's Magazine*, for which his last poems were written. Among these were "The Song of the Shirt," "The Lay of the Laborer," and "The Bridge of Sighs," all written on the bed from which he never rose.

His illness and other misfortunes had reduced him to poverty, and a short time before he died he received a pension of £100, which was continued to his widow. He died on May 3, 1845, and was buried in Kensall Green.

Hood's story is sorrowful in contrasts. The life he lived was sadly at variance with the laughter he excited. The prince of punsters jested in his affliction and smiled through his suffering. The pathetic poems which he wrote in his last illness were at once the truest expression of himself and the noblest productions of his genius.

MISS KILMANSEGG AND HER PRECIOUS LEG.

A GOLDEN LEGEND.

"What is here?
Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold?"
Timon of Athens.

HER PEDIGREE.

To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree,
To the very root of the family tree,
  Were a task as rash as ridiculous:
Through antediluvian mists as thick
As London fog such a line to pick
Were enough, in truth, to puzzle Old Nick,
  Not to name Sir Harris Nicholas.

It wouldn't require much verbal strain
To trace the Kill-man, perchance to Cain;
  But waiving all such digressions,
Suffice it, according to family lore,
A Patriarch Kilmansegg lived of yore,
  Who was famed for his great possessions.

Tradition said he feathered his nest
Through an Agricultural interest
  In the Golden Age of Farming;
When golden eggs were laid by the geese,
And Colchian sheep wore a golden fleece,
And golden pippins—the sterling kind
Of Hesperus—now so hard to find—
  Made Horticulture quite charming!

A Lord of Land, on his own estate,
He lived at a very lively rate,
  But his income would bear carousing:
Such acres he had of pasture and heath,
With herbage so rich from the ore beneath,
The very ewes' and lambkins' teeth
  Were turned into gold by browsing.

He gave, without any extra thrift,
A flock of sheep for a birthday gift
  To each son of his loins, or daughter;
And his debts—if debts he had—at will
He liquidated by giving each bill
  A dip in Pactolian water.

'Twas said that even his pigs of lead,
By crossing with some by Midas bred,

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Thos Hood

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Made a perfect mine of his piggery.
And as for cattle, one yearling bull
Was worth all Smithfield-market full
Of the Golden Bulls of Pope Gregory.

The high-bred horses within his stud,
Like human creatures of birth and blood,
Had their Golden Cups and flagons;
And as for the common husbandry nags,
Their noses were tied in money-bags,
When they stopped with the carts and wagons.

Moreover, he had a Golden Ass,
Sometimes at stall, and sometimes at grass,
That was worth his own weight in money—
And a golden hive, on a golden bank,
Where golden bees, by alchemical prank,
Gathered gold instead of honey.

Gold! and gold! and gold without end!
He had gold to lay by, and gold to spend,
Gold to give, and gold to lend,
And reversions of gold *in futuro*.
In wealth the family revelled and rolled,
Himself and wife and sons so bold;—
And his daughters sang to their harps of gold
"O bella eta del' oro!"

Such was the tale of the Kilmansegg Kin,
In golden text on a vellum skin,
Though certain people would wink and grin,
And declare the whole story a parable—
That the Ancestor rich was one Jacob Ghrimes,
Who held a long lease, in prosperous times,
Of acres, pasture and arable.

That as money makes money, his golden bees
Were the Five per Cents, or which you please,
When his cash was more than plenty—
That the golden cups were racing affairs;
And his daughters, who sang Italian airs,
Had their golden harps of Clementi.

That the Golden Ass, or Golden Bull,
Was English John with his pockets full,
Then at war by land and water:
While beef, and mutton, and other meat,
Were almost as dear as money to eat,
And Farmers reaped Golden Harvests of wheat
At the Lord knows what per quarter!

HER BIRTH.

What different dooms our birthdays bring!
For instance, one little manikin thing
Survives to wear many a wrinkle;
While death forbids another to wake,
And a son that it took nine moons to make
Expires without even a twinkle!

Into this world we come like ships,
Launched from the docks, and stocks, and slips,
For fortune fair or fatal;
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars accord!
This babe to be hailed and wooed as a lord!
And that to be shunned like a leper!
One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn,
Another, like Colchester native, born
To its vinegar, only, and pepper!

One is littered under a roof
Neither wind nor water proof—
That's the prose of Love in a Cottage—
A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
The bid of "a mess of pottage."

Born of Fortunatus's kin,
Another comes tenderly ushered in
To a prospect all bright and burnished:
No tenant he for life's back slums—
He comes to the world as a gentleman comes
To a lodging ready furnished.

And the other sex—the tender—the fair—
What wide reverses of fate are there!
While Margaret, charmed by the Bulbul rare,
In a garden of Gul reposes—
Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street,
Till—think of that, ye who find life so sweet!—
She hates the smell of roses!

Not so with the infant Kilmansegg!
She was not born to steal or beg,
Or gather cresses in ditches;
To plait the straw, or bind the shoe,
Or sit all day to hem and sew,
As females must, and not a few—
To fill their insides with stitches!

She was not doomed, for bread to eat,
To be put to her hands as well as her feet—
To carry home linen from mangles—
Or heavy-hearted, and weary-limbed,
To dance on a rope in a jacket trimmed
With as many blows as spangles.

She was one of those who by Fortune's boon
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle:
To speak according to poet's wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rocked the cradle.

At her first *début* she found her head
On a pillow of down, in a downy bed,
With a damask canopy over,
For although by the vulgar popular saw
All mothers are said to be "in the straw,"
Some children are born in clover.

Her very first draught of vital air
It was not the common chameleon fare
Of plebeian lungs and noses—
No—her earliest sniff
Of this world was a whiff
Of the genuine Otto of Roses!

When she saw the light—it was no mere ray
Of that light so common—so every-day—
That the sun each morning launches—
But six wax-tapers dazzled her eyes,

Digitized by Google

From a thing—a gooseberry-bush for size—
With a golden stem and branches.

She was born exactly at half-past two,
As witnessed a timepiece in or-molu
That stood on a marble table—
Showing at once the time of day,
And a team of *Gildings* running away
As fast as they were able,
With a golden God, with a golden Star,
And a golden Spear, in a golden Car,
According to Grecian fable.

Like other babes, at her birth she cried;
Which made a sensation far and wide,
Ay, for twenty miles around her;
For though to the ear 'twas nothing more
Than an infant's squall, it was really the roar
Of a Fifty-thousand Pounder!
It shook the next heir
In his library-chair,
And made him cry "Confound her!

Of signs and omens there was no dearth,
Any more than at Owen Glendower's birth,
Or the advent of other great people:
Two bullocks dropped dead,
As if knocked on the head,
And barrels of stout
And ale ran about,
And the village-bells such a peal rang out,
That they cracked the village steeple.

In no time at all, like mushroom spawn,
Tables sprang up all over the lawn;
Not furnished scantily or shabbily,
But on scale as vast
As that huge repast,
With its loads and cargoes
Of drink and botargoes,
At the Birth of the Babe in Rabelais.

Hundreds of men were turned into beasts,
Like the guests at Circe's horrible feasts,
By the magic of ale and cider:
And each country lass, and each country lad,
Began to caper and dance like mad,
And even some old ones appeared to have had
A bite from the Naples Spider.

Then as night came on,
It had scared King John,
Who considered such signs not risible,
To have seen the maroons,
And the whirling moons,
And the serpents of flame,
And wheels of the same,
That according to some were "whizzable."

Oh, happy Hope of the Kilmanseggs!
Thrice happy in head, and body, and legs,
That her parents had such full pockets!
For had she been born of Want and Thrift,
For care and nursing all adrift,
It's ten to one she had had to make shift
With rickets instead of rockets!

And how was the precious Baby dressed?
In a robe of the East, with lace of the West,
Like one of Crœsus's issue—
Her best bibs were made
Of rich gold brocade,
And the others of silver tissue.

And when the Baby inclined to nap
She was lulled on a Gros de Naples lap,
By a nurse in a modish Paris cap,
Of notions so exalted,
She drank nothing lower than Curaçoa,
Maraschino, or pink Noyau,
And on principle never malted.

From a golden boat, with a golden spoon,
The babe was fed night, morning, and noon;
And although the tale seems fabulous,
'Tis said her tops and bottoms were gilt,
Like the oats in that Stable-yard Palace built
For the horse of Heliogabalus.

And when she took to squall and kick—
For pain will wring and pins will prick
E'en the wealthiest nabob's daughter—
They gave her no vulgar Dalby or gin,
But a liquor with leaf of gold therein,
Videlicet—Dantzic Water.

In short, she was born, and bred, and nursed,
And dressed in the best from the very first,
To please the genteelest censor—
And then, as soon as strength would allow,
Was vaccinated, as babes are now,
With virus taken from the best-bred cow
Of Lord Althorpe's—now Earl Spencer.

HER CHRISTENING.

Though Shakespeare asks us, "What's in a name?"
(As if cognomens were much the same,)
There's really a very great scope in it.
A name?—why wasn't there Doctor Dodd,
That servant at once of Mammon and God,
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,
A prison—a cart—and a rope in it?

A name?—if the party had a voice,
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice?
As a Hogg, a Grubb, or a Chubb rejoice?
Or any such nauseous blazon?
Not to mention many a vulgar name,
That would make a door-plate blush for shame,
If door-plates were not so brazen!

A name?—it has more than nominal worth,
And belongs to good or bad luck at birth—
As dames of a certain degree know.
In spite of his Page's hat and hose,
His Page's jacket, and buttons in rows,
Bob only sounds like a page of prose
Till turned into Rupertino.

Now, to christen the infant Kilmansegg,
For days and days it was quite a plague,
To hunt the list in the Lexicon:
And scores were tried, like coin, by the ring,
Ere names were found just the proper thing
For a minor rich as a Mexican.

Digitized by Google

Then cards were sent, the presence to beg
Of all the kin of Kilmansegg,
White, yellow, and brown relations:
Brothers, Wardens of City Halls,
And Uncles—rich as three Golden Balls
From taking pledges of nations.

Nephews, whom Fortune seemed to bewitch,
Rising in life like rockets—
Nieces whose doweries knew no hitch—
Aunts as certain of dying rich
As candles in golden sockets—
Gousins German, and Cousin's sons,
All thriving and opulent—some had tons
Of Kentish hops in their pockets!

For money had stuck to the race through life
(As it did to the bushel when cash so rife
Posed Ali Baba's brother's wife)—
And down to the Cousins and Cozlings,
The fortunate brood of the Kilmanseggs,
As if they had come out of golden eggs,
Were all as wealthy as "Goslings."

It would fill a Court Gazette to name
What East and West End people came
To the rite of Christianity:
The lofty Lord, and the titled Dame,
All di'monds, plumes, and urbanity:
His Lordship the Mayor with his golden chain,
And two Gold Sticks, and the Sheriffs twain,
Nine foreign Counts, and other great men
With their orders and stars, to help M or N
To renounce all pomp and vanity.

To paint the maternal Kilmansegg
The pen of an Eastern Poet would beg,
And need an elaborate sonnet:
How she sparkled with gems whenever she stirred,
And her head niddle-noddled at every word,
And seemed so happy, a Paradise Bird
Had nidificated upon it.

And Sir Jacob, the Father, strutted and bowed,
And smiled to himself, and laughed aloud,
To think of his heiress and daughter—
And then in his pockets he made a grope,
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
Seemed washing his hands with invisible soap
In imperceptible water.

He had rolled in money like pigs in mud,
Till it seemed to have entered into his blood
By some occult projection:
And his cheeks, instead of a healthy hue,
As yellow as any guinea grew.
Making the common phrase seem true
About a rich complexion.

And now came the nurse, and during a pause,
Her dead-leaf satin would fitly cause
A very autumnal rustle—
So full of figure, so full of fuss,
As she carried about the babe to buss,
She seemed to be nothing but bustle.

A wealthy Nabob was Godpapa,
And an Indian Begum was Godmamma,
Whose jewels a Queen might covet—
And the Priest was a Vicar, and Dean withal
Of that Temple we see with a Golden Ball
And a Golden Cross above it.

The Font was a bowl of American gold
Won by Raleigh in days of old,
In spite of Spanish bravado;
And the Book of Prayer was so overrun
With gilt devices, it shone in the sun
Like a copy—a presentation one—
Of Humboldt's "El Dorado."

Gold! and gold! and nothing but gold!
The same auriferous shine behold
Wherever the eye could settle!
On the walls — the sideboard — the ceiling-sky—
On the gorgeous footmen standing by,
In coats to delight a miner's eye
With seams of the precious metal.

Gold! and gold! and besides the gold,
The very robe of the infant told
A tale of wealth in every fold,
It lapped her like a vapor!
So fine! so thin! the mind at a loss
Could compare it to nothing except a cross
Of cobweb with bank-note paper.

Then her pearls—'twas a perfect sight forsooth,
To see them like "the dew of her youth,"
In such a plentiful sprinkle.
Meanwhile, the Vicar read through the form,
And gave her another, not overwarm,
That made her little eyes twinkle.

Then the babe was crossed and blessed amain;
But instead of the Kate, or Ann, or Jane,
Which the humbler female endorses—
Instead of one name, as some people prefix,
Kilmansegg went at the tails of six,
Like a carriage of state with its horses.

Oh then the kisses she got, and hugs!
The golden mugs and the golden jugs
That lent fresh rays to the midges!
The golden knives, and the golden spoons,
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons,
It was one of the Kilmansegg's own saloons,
But looked like Rundell and Bridge's!

Gold! and gold! the new and the old!
The company ate and drank from gold,
They revelled, they sang, and were merry;
And one of the Gold Sticks rose from his chair,
And toasted "the Lass with the golden hair"
In a bumper of golden Sherry.

Gold! still gold! it rained on the nurse,
Who, unlike Danaë, was none the worse:
There was nothing but guineas glistening!
Fifty were given to Doctor James,
For calling the little baby names;
And for saying Amen!
The Clerk had ten,
And that was the end of the Christening.

Digitized by Google

HER CHILDHOOD.

Our youth! our childhood! that spring of springs!
'Tis surely one of the blessedest things
That Nature ever invented!
When the rich are wealthy beyond their wealth,
And the poor are rich in spirits and health,
And all with their lots contented!

There's little Phelim he sings like a thrush,
In the selfsame pair of patchwork plush,
With the selfsame empty pockets,
That tempted his daddy so often to cut
His throat, or jump in the water-butt—
But what cares Phelim? an empty nut
Would sooner bring tears to their sockets.

Give him a collar without a skirt,
That's the Irish linen for shirt,
And a slice of bread, with a taste of dirt,
That's poverty's Irish butter,
And what does he lack to make him blest?
Some oyster-shells, or a sparrow's nest,
A candle-end and a gutter.

But to leave the happy Phelim alone,
Gnawing, perchance, a marrowless bone,
For which no dog would quarrel—
Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg,
Cutting her first little toothy-peg
With a fifty-guinea coral—
A peg upon which
About poor and rich
Reflection might hang a moral.

Born in wealth, and wealthily nursed,
Capped, papped, napped, and lapped from the first,
On the knees of Prodigality,
Her childhood was one eternal round
Of the game of going on Tiddler's ground
Picking up gold—in reality.

With extempore carts she never played,
Or the odds and ends of a Tinker's trade,
Or little dirt pies and puddings made,
Like children happy and squalid;
The very puppet she had to pet,
Like a bait for the "Nix my Dolly" set,
Was a Dolly of gold—and solid!

Gold! and gold! 'twas the burden still!
To gain the Heiress's early good-will
There was much corruption and bribery—
The yearly cost of her golden toys
Would have given half London's Charity Boys
And Charity Girls the annual joys
Of a holiday dinner at Highbury.

Bon-bons she ate from the gilt cornet;
And gilded queens on St. Bartlemy's day;
Till her fancy was tinged by her presents—
And first a goldfinch excited her wish,
Then a spherical bowl with its golden fish,
And then two Golden Pheasants.

Nay, once she squalled and screamed like wild—
And it shows how the bias we give to a child
Is a thing most weighty and solemn:—
But whence was wonder or blame to spring
If little Miss K.—after such a swing—
Made a dust for the flaming gilded thing
On the top of the Fish-Street column?

HER EDUCATION.

According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read
For much good or much bad they are debtors—
But before with their A B C they start,
There are things in morals, as well as art,
That play a very important part—
"Impressions before the letters."

Dame Education begins the pile,
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian style,
But alas for the elevation!
If the Lady's maid, or Gossip the Nurse
With a load of rubbish, or something worse,
Have made a rotten foundation.

Even thus with little Miss Kilmansegg,
Before she learned her E for egg,
Ere her Governess came, or her masters—
Teachers of quite a different kind
Had "crammed" her beforehand, and put her mind
In a go-cart on golden casters.

Long before her A B and C,
They had taught her by heart her L. S. D.
And how she was born a great Heiress;
And as sure as London is built of bricks,
My Lord would ask her the day to fix,
To ride in a fine gilt coach and six,
Like Her Worship the Lady May'ress.

Instead of stories from Edgeworth's page,
The true golden lore for our golden age,
Or lessons from Barbauld and Trimmer,
Teaching the worth of Virtue and Health,
All that she knew was the Virtue of Wealth,
Provided by vulgar nursery stealth
With a Book of Leaf Gold for a Primer.

The very metal of merit they told,
And praised her for being as "good as gold!"
Till she grew as a peacock haughty;
Of money they talk'd the whole day round,
And weighed desert like grapes by the pound,
Till she had an idea from the very sound
That people with naught were naughty.

They praised—poor children with nothing at all!
Lord! how you twaddle and waddle and squall
Like common-bred geese and ganders!
What sad little bad little figures you make
To the rich Miss K., whose plainest seed-cake
Was stuffed with corianders!

They praised her falls, as well as her walk,
Flatterers make cream cheese of chalk.
They praised—how they praised—her very small talk,

Digitized by Google

As if it fell from a Solon;
Or the girl who at each pretty phrase let drop
A ruby comma, or pearl full-stop,
Or an emerald semicolon.

They praised her spirit, and now and then
The Nurse brought her own little "nevy" Ben,
To play with the future May'ress,
And when he got raps, and taps, and slaps,
Scratches, and pinches, snips, and snaps,
As if from a Tigress, or Bearess,
They told him how Lords would court that hand,
And always gave him to understand,
While he rubbed, poor soul,
His carroty poll,
That his hair has been pulled by "a *Hairess*."

Such were the lessons from maid and nurse,
A Governess helped to make still worse,
Giving an appetite so perverse
Fresh diet whereon to batten—
Beginning with A B C to hold
Like a royal play-bill printed in gold
On a square of pearl-white satin.

The books to teach the verbs and nouns,
And those about countries, cities, and towns,
Instead of their sober drabs and browns,
Were in crimson silk, with gilt edges;—
Her Butler, and Enfield, and Entick—in short
Her "Early Lessons" of every sort,
Looked like Souvenirs, Keepsakes, and Pledges.

Old Johnson shone out in as fine array
As he did one night when he went to the play;
Chambaud like a beau of King Charles's day—
Lindley Murray in like conditions—
Each weary, unwelcome, irksome task,
Appeared in a fancy dress and a mask—
If you wish for similar copies, ask
For Howell and James's Editions.

Novels she read to amuse her mind,
But always the affluent match-making kind
That ends with Promessi Sposi,
And a father-in-law so wealthy and grand,
He could give cheque-mate to Coutts in the Strand;
So, along with a ring and posy,
He endows the Bride with Golconda off hand,
And gives the Groom Potosi.

Plays she perused—but she liked the best
Those comedy gentlefolks always possessed
Of fortunes so truly romantic—
Of money so ready that right or wrong
It always is ready to go for a song,
Throwing it, going it, pitching it strong—
They ought to have purses as green and long,
As the cucumber called the Gigantic.

Then Eastern Tales she loved for the sake
Of the purse of Oriental make,
And the thousand pieces they put in it—
But Pastoral scenes on her heart fell cold,
For Nature with her had lost its hold,
No field but the Field of the Cloth of Gold
Would ever have caught her foot in it.

What more? She learned to sing, and dance,
To sit on a horse, although he should prance,
And to speak a French not spoken in France
Any more than at Babel's building—
And she painted shells, and flowers, and Turks,
But her great delight was in Fancy Works
That are done with gold or gilding.

Gold! still gold!—the bright and the dead,
With golden beads, and gold lace, and gold thread
She worked in gold, as if for her bread;
The metal had so undermined her,
Gold ran in her thoughts and filled her brain,
She was golden-headed as Peter's cane
With which he walked behind her.

HER ACCIDENT.

The horse that carried Miss Kilmansegg,
And a better never lifted leg,
Was a very rich bay, called Banker—
A horse of a breed and a metal so rare—
By Bullion out of an Ingot mare—
That for action, the best of figures, and air,
It made many good judges hanker.

And when she took a ride in the Park,
Equestrian Lord, or pedestrian Clerk,
Was thrown in an amorous fever,
To see the Heiress how well she sat,
With her groom behind her, Bob or Nat,
In Green, half smothered with gold, and a hat
With more gold lace than beaver.

And then when Banker obtained a pat,
To see how he arched his neck at that!
He snorted with pride and pleasure!
Like the Steed in the fable so lofty and grand,
Who gave the poor Ass to understand,
That *he* didn't carry a bag of sand,
But a burden of golden treasure.

A load of treasure?—alas! alas!
Had her horse but been fed upon English grass,
And sheltered in Yorkshire spinneys,
Had he scoured the sand with the Desert Ass,
Or where the American whinnies—
But a hunter from Erin's turf and gorse,
A regular thorough-bred Irish horse,
Why, he ran away, as a matter of course,
With a girl worth her weight in guineas!

Mayhap 'tis the trick of such pampered nags
To shy at the sight of a beggar in rags,
But away, like the bolt of a rabbit,
Away went the horse in the madness of fright,
And away went the horsewoman mocking the sight—
Was yonder blue flash a flash of blue light,
Or only the skirt of her habit?

Away she flies, with the groom behind—
It looks like a race of the Calmuck kind,
When Hymen himself is the starter;
And the Maid rides first in the four-footed strife,
Riding, striding, as if for her life,

Digitized by Google

While the Lover rides after to catch him a wife,
Although it's catching a Tartar.

But the Groom has lost his glittering hat!
Though he does not sigh and pull up for that—
Alas! his horse is a tit for Tat
To sell to a very low bidder—
His wind is ruined, his shoulder is sprung,
Things, though a horse be handsome and young,
A purchaser *will* consider.

But still flies the Heiress through stones and dust,
Oh, for a fall, if fall she must,
On the gentle lap of Flora!
But still, thank Heaven! she clings to her seat—
Away! away! she could ride a dead heat
With the Dead who rides so fast and fleet,
In the Ballad of Leonora!

Away she gallops!—it's awful work!
It's faster than Turpin's ride to York,
On Bess, that notable clipper!
She has circled the Ring!—she crosses the Park!
Mazeppa, although he was stripped so stark,
Mazeppa couldn't outstrip her!

The fields seem running away with the folks!
The Elms are having a race for the Oaks!
At a pace that all Jockeys disparages!
All, all is racing! the Serpentine
Seems rushing past like the "arrowy Rhine,"
The houses have got on a railway line,
And are off like the first-class carriages!

She'll lose her life! she is losing her breath!
A cruel chase, she is chasing Death,
As female shriekings forewarn her:
And now—as gratis as blood of Guelph—
She clears that gate, which has cleared itself
Since then, at Hyde Park Corner!

Alas! for the hope of the Kilmanseggs!
For her head, her brains, her body, and legs,
Her life's not worth a copper!
Willy-nilly,
In Piccadilly,
A hundred hearts turn sick and chilly,
A hundred voices cry "Stop her!"
And one old gentleman stares and stands,
Shakes his head and lifts his hands,
And says, "How very improper!"

On and on!—what a perilous run!
The iron rails seem all mingling in one,
To shut out the Green Park scenery!
And now the Cellar its dangers reveals,
She shudders—she shrieks—she's doomed, she feels,
To be torn by powers of horses and wheels,
Like a spinner by steam machinery!

Sick with horror she shuts her eyes,
But the very stones seem uttering cries,
As they did to that Persian daughter,
When she climbed up the steep vociferous hill,
Her little silver flagon to fill
With the magical Golden Water!

"Batter her! shatter her!
Throw and scatter her!"
Shouts each stony-hearted chatterer!
"Dash at the heavy Dover!
Spill her! kill her! tear and tatter her!
Smash her! crash her!" (the stones didn't flatter her!)
"Kick her brains out! let her blood spatter her!
Roll on her over and over!"

For so she gathered the awful sense
Of the street in its past unmacadamized tense,
As the wild horse overran it,—
His four heels making the clatter of six,
Like a Devil's tattoo, played with iron sticks
On a kettle-drum of granite!

On! still on! she's dazzled with hints
Of oranges, ribbons, and colored prints
A Kaleidoscope jumble of shapes and tints,
And human faces all flashing,
Bright and brief as the sparks from the flints,
That the desperate hoof keeps dashing!

On and on! still frightfully fast!
Dover-street, Bond-street, all are past!
But—yes—no—yes!—they're down at last!
The Furies and Fates have found them!
Down they go with a sparkle and crash,
Like a Bark that's struck by the lightning flash—
There's a shriek—and a sob—
And the dense dark mob
Like a billow closes around them!

* * * * *

"She breathes!"
"She don't!"
"She'll recover!"
"She won't!"
"She's stirring! she's living, by Nemesis!"
Gold, still gold! on counter and shelf!
Golden dishes as plenty as delf!
Miss Kilmansegg's coming again to herself
On an opulent Goldsmith's premises!

Gold! fine gold!—both yellow and red,
Beaten, and molten—polished, and dead—
To see the gold with profusion spread
In all forms of its manufacture!
But what avails gold to Miss Kilmansegg,
When the femoral bone of her dexter leg
Has met with a compound fracture?
Gold may soothe Adversity's smart:
Nay, help to bind up a broken heart;
But to try it on any other part
Were as certain a disappointment,
As if one should rub the dish and plate,
Taken out of a Staffordshire crate—
In the hope of a Golden Service of State—
With Singleton's "Golden Ointment."

HER PRECIOUS LEG.

"As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined,"
Is an adage often recalled to mind,
Referring to juvenile bias:
And never so well is the verity seen,

Digitized by Google

As when to the weak, warped side we lean,
  While Life's tempests and hurricanes try us.

Even thus with Miss K., and her broken limb,
By a very, very remarkable whim,
  She showed her early tuition:
While the buds of character came into blow
With a certain tinge that served to show
The nursery culture long ago,
  As the graft is known by fruition!

For the King's Physician, who nursed the case,
His verdict gave with an awful face,
  And three others concurred to egg it;
That the Patient to give old Death the slip,
Like the Pope, instead of a personal trip,
  Must send her Leg as a Legate.

The limb was doomed—it couldn't be saved!
And like other people the patient behaved,
Nay, bravery that cruel parting braved,
  Which makes some persons so falter,
They rather would part, without a groan,
With the flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone,
  They obtained at St. George's altar.

But when it came to fitting the stump
With a proxy limb—then flatly and plump
  She spoke, in the spirit olden:
She couldn't—she shouldn't—she wouldn't—have wood!
Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,
And she swore an oath, or something as good,
  The proxy limb should be golden!

A wooden leg! what, a sort of peg,
  For your common Jockeys and Jennies!
No, no, her mother might worry and plague—
Weep, go down on her knees, and beg,
But nothing would move Miss Kilmansegg!
She could—she would have a Golden Leg,
  If it cost ten thousand guineas!

Wood, indeed, in Forest or Park,
With its sylvan honors, and feudal bark,
  Is an aristocratical article:
But split and sawn, and hacked about town,
Serving all needs of pauper or clown,
Trod on! staggered on! Wood cut down
  Is vulgar—fibre and particle!

And Cork! when the noble Cork-Tree shades
A lovely group of Castilian maids,
  'Tis a thing for a song or sonnet!—
But cork, as it stops the bottle of gin,
Or bungs the beer—the *small* beer—in,
It pierced her heart like a corking-pin,
  To think of standing upon it!

A Leg of Gold—solid gold throughout,
Nothing else, whether slim or stout,
  Should ever support her, God willing!
She must — she could — she would have her whim,
Her father, she turned a deaf ear to him—
  He might kill her—she didn't mind killing!
He was welcome to cut off her other limb—
  He might cut her all off with a shilling!

All other promised gifts were in vain,
Golden Girdle, or Golden Chain,
She writhed with impatience more than pain,
  And uttered "pshaws!" and "pishes!"
But a Leg of Gold, as she lay in bed,
It danced before her—it ran in her head!
  It jumped with her dearest wishes!

"Gold—gold—gold! Oh, let it be gold!"
Asleep or awake that tale she told,
  And when she grew delirious:
Till her parents resolved to grant her wish,
If they melted down plate, and goblet, and dish,
  The case was getting so serious.

So a leg was made in a comely mould,
Of Gold, fine virgin glittering gold,
  As solid as man could make it—
Solid in foot, and calf, and shank,
A prodigious sum of money it sank;
In fact 'twas a branch of the Family Bank,
  And no easy matter to break it.

All sterling metal—not half-and-half,
The Goldsmith's mark was stamped on the calf—
  'Twas pure as from Mexican barter!
And to make it more costly, just over the knee,
Where another ligature used to be,
Was a circle of jewels, worth shillings to see,
  A new-fangled Badge of the Garter!

'Twas a splendid, brilliant, beautiful Leg,
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,
That precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg!
  For, thanks to parental bounty,
Secure from Mortification's touch,
She stood on a Member that cost as much
  As a Member for all the County!

HER FAME.

To gratify stern ambition's whims,
What hundreds and thousands of precious limbs
  On a field of battle we scatter!
Severed by sword, or bullet, or saw,
Off they go, all bleeding and raw,—
But the public seems to get the lockjaw,
  So little is said on the matter!

Legs, the tightest that ever were seen,
The tightest, the lightest, that danced on the green,
  Cutting capers to sweet Kitty Clover;
Shattered, scattered, cut, and bowled down,
Off they go, worse off for renown,
A line in the *Times*, or a talk about town,
  Than the leg that a fly runs over?

But the Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg,
That gowden, goolden, golden leg,
  Was the theme of all conversation!
Had it been a Pillar of Church and State,
Or a prop to support the whole Dead Weight,
It could not have furnished more debate
  To the heads and tails of the nation!

East and west, and north and south,
Though useless for either hunger or drouth,—

Digitized by Google

The Leg was in everybody's mouth,
  To use a poetical figure,
Rumor, in taking her ravenous swim,
Saw, and seized on the tempting limb,
  Like a shark on the leg of a nigger.

Wilful murder fell very dead;
Debates in the House were hardly read;
In vain the Police Reports were fed
  With Irish riots and *rumpuses*—
The Leg! the Leg! was the great event,
Through every circle in life it went,
  Like the leg of a pair of compasses.

The last new Novel seemed tame and flat,
The Leg, a novelty newer than that,
  Had tripped up the heels of Fiction!
It Burked the very essays of Burke,
And alas! how Wealth over Wit plays the Turk,
As a regular piece of goldsmith's work,
  Got the better of Goldsmith's diction!

"A leg of gold! what, of solid gold?"
Cried rich and poor, and young and old—
  And Master and Miss and Madam—
'Twas the talk of 'Change—the Alley—the Bank—
And with men of scientific rank
It made as much stir as the fossil shank
  Of a Lizard coeval with Adam!

Of course with Greenwich and Chelsea elves,
Men who had lost a limb themselves,
  Its interest did not dwindle—
But Bill, and Ben, and Jack, and Tom,
Could hardly have spun more yarns therefrom
  If the leg had been a spindle.

Meanwhile the story went to and fro,
Till, gathering like the ball of snow,
By the time it got to Stratford-le-Bow,
  Through Exaggeration's touches,
The Heiress and Hope of the Kilmanseggs
Was propped on *two* fine Golden Legs,
  And a pair of Golden Crutches!

Never had Leg so great a run!
'Twas the "go" and the "Kick" thrown into one!
The mode—the new thing under the sun,
  The rage—the fancy—the passion!
Bonnets were named, and hats were worn,
A la Golden Leg instead of Leghorn,
  And stockings and shoes,
    Of golden hues,
  Took the lead in the walks of fashion!

The Golden Leg had a vast career,
It was sung and danced—and to show how near
  Low Folly to lofty approaches,
Down to society's very dregs,
The Belles of Wapping wore "Kilmanseggs,"
And St. Giles's Beaux sported Golden Legs
  In their pinchbeck pins and brooches!

HER FIRST STEP.

Supposing the Trunk and Limbs of Man
Shared, on the allegorical plan,
  By the Passions that mark Humanity,
Whichever might claim the head, or heart,
The stomach, or any other part,
  The Legs would be seized by Vanity.

There's Bardus, a six-foot column of fop,
A lighthouse without any light atop,
  Whose height would attract beholders,
If he had not lost some inches clear
By looking down at his kerseymere,
Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,
  Till he got a stoop in his shoulders.

Talk of Art, of Science, or Books,
And down go the everlasting looks,
  To his crural beauties so wedded!
Try him, whenever you will, you find
His mind in his legs, and his legs in his mind,
All prongs and folly—in short a kind
  Of fork—that is Fiddle-headed.

What wonder, then, if Miss Kilmansegg,
With a splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,
Disdained to hide it like Joan or Meg,
  In petticoats stuffed or quilted?
Not she! 'twas her convalescent whim
To dazzle the world with her precious limb—
  Nay, to go a little high-kilted.

So cards were sent for that sort of mob
Where Tartars and Africans hob-and-nob,
And the Cherokee talks of his cab and cob
  To Polish or Lapland lovers—
Cards like that hieroglyphical call
To a geographical Fancy Ball
  On the recent Post-Office covers.

For if Lion-hunters—and great ones too—
Would mob a savage from Latakoo,
Or squeeze for a glimpse of Prince Le Boo,
  That unfortunate Sandwich scion—
Hundreds of first-rate people, no doubt,
Would gladly, madly, rush to a rout,
  That promised a Golden Lion!

HER FANCY BALL.

Of all the spirits of evil fame
That hurt the soul or injure the frame,
  And poison what's honest and hearty,
There's none more needs a Mathew to preach
A cooling, antiphlogistic speech,
    To praise and enforce
      A temperate course,
  Than the Evil spirit of party.

Go to the House of Commons, or Lords,
And they seem to be busy with simple words
  In their popular sense or pedantic—
But, alas! with their cheers, and sneers, and jeers,
They're really busy, whatever appears,
Putting peas in each other's ears,
  To drive their enemies frantic!

Thus Tories like to worry the Whigs,
Who treat them in turn like Schwalbach pigs,

Digitized by Google

Giving them lashes, thrashes, and digs,
  With their writhing and pain delighted—
But after all that's said, and more,
The malice and spite of Party are poor
To the malice and spite of a party next door,
  To a party not invited.

On with the cap and out with the light,
Weariness bids the world good night,
  At least for the usual season;
But hark! a clatter of horses' heels;
And Sleep and Silence are broken on wheels,
  Like Wilful Murder and Treason!

Another crash—and the carriage goes—
Again poor Weariness seeks the repose
  That Nature demands imperious;
But Echo takes up the burden now,
With the rattling chorus of row-de-dow-dow,
Till Silence herself seems making a row,
  Like a Quaker gone delirious!

'Tis night—a winter night—and the stars
Are shining like winkin'—Venus and Mars
Are rolling along in their golden cars
  Through the sky's serene expansion—
But vainly the stars dispense their rays,
Venus and Mars are lost in the blaze
  Of the Kilmanseggs' luminous mansion!

Up jumps Fear in a terrible fright!
His bedchamber windows look so bright.
  With light all the Square is glutted!
Up he jumps like a sole from the pan,
And a tremor sickens his inward man,
For he feels as only a gentleman can,
  Who thinks he's being "gutted."

Again Fear settles, all snug and warm;
But only to dream of a dreadful storm
  From Autumn's sulphurous locker;
But the only electric body that falls,
Wears a negative coat and positive smalls,
And draws the peal that so appalls
  From the Kilmanseggs' brazen knocker!

'Tis Curiosity's Benefit night—
And perchance 'tis the English Second-Sight,
  But whatever it be, so be it—
As the friends and guests of Miss Kilmansegg
Crowd in to look at her Golden Leg,
        As many more
        Mob round the door,
  To see them going to see it!

In they go—in jackets and cloaks,
Plumes, and bonnets, turbans, and toques,
  As if to a Congress of Nations:
Greeks and Malays, with daggers and dicks,
Spaniards, Jews, Chinese, and Turks—
Some like original foreign works,
  But mostly like bad translations.

In they go, and to work like a pack,
Juan, Moses, and Shacabac,
Tom, and Jerry, and Springheeled Jack,
  For some of low Fancy are lovers—
Skirting, zigzagging, casting about,
Here and there, and in and out,
With a crush, and a rush, for a full-bodied rout
  In one of the stiffest of covers.

In they went, and hunted about,
Open mouthed like chub and trout,
And some with the upper lip thrust out,
  Like that fish for routing, a barbel—
While Sir Jacob stood to welcome the crowd,
And rubbed his hands, and smiled aloud,
And bowed, and bowed, and bowed, and bowed,
  Like a man who is sawing marble.

For Princes were there, and Noble Peers
Dukes descended from Norman spears:
Earls that dated from early years;
  And Lords in vast variety—
Besides the Gentry both new and old—
For people who stand on legs of gold
  Are sure to stand well with society.

"But where—where—where?" with one accord
Cried Moses and Mufti, Jack and my Lord,
  Wang-Fong and Il Bondocani—
When slow, and heavy, and dead as a dump,
They heard a foot begin to stump,
        Thump! lump!
        Lump! thump!
  Like the Spectre in "Don Giovanni!"

And lo! the Heiress, Miss Kilmansegg,
With her splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
  In the garb of a Goddess olden—
Like chaste Diana going to hunt,
With a golden spear—which of course was blunt,
And a tunic looped up to a gem in front,
  To show the Leg that was Golden!

Gold! still gold! her Crescent behold,
That should be silver, but would be gold;
  And her robe's auriferous spangles!
Her golden stomacher—how she would melt!
Her golden quiver, and golden belt,
  Where a golden bugle dangles!

And her jewelled Garter? Oh, Sin! Oh, Shame!
Let Pride and Vanity bear the blame,
That brings such blots on female fame!
  But to be a true recorder,
Besides its thin transparent stuff,
The tunic was looped quite high enough
  To give a glimpse of the Order!

But what have sin or shame to do
With a Golden Leg—and a stout one too?
  Away with all Prudery's panics!
That the precious metal, by thick and thin,
Will cover square acres of land or sin,
        Is a fact made plain
        Again and again,
  In Morals as well as Mechanics.

A few, indeed, of her proper sex,
Who seemed to feel her foot on their necks,
And feared their charms would meet with checks
  From so rare and splendid a blazon—
A few cried "fie!"—and "forward!"—and "bold!"
And said of the Leg it might be gold,
  But to them it looked like brazen!

Digitized by Google

'Twas hard they hinted for flesh and blood,
Virtue, and Beauty, and all that 's good,
To strike to mere dross their topgallants—
But what were Beauty, or Virtue, or Worth,
Gentle manners, or gentle birth,
Nay, what the most talented head on earth
To a Leg worth fifty Talents!

But the men sang quite another hymn
Of glory and praise to the precious Limb—
Age, sordid Age, admired the whim,
And its indecorum pardoned—
While half of the young—ay, more than half—
Bowed down and worshipped the Golden Calf
Like the Jews when their hearts were hardened.

A Golden Leg! what fancies it fired!
What golden wishes and hopes inspired!
To give but a mere abridgment—
What a leg to leg-bail Embarrassment's serf!
What a leg for a Leg to take on the turf!
What a leg for a marching regiment!

A Golden Leg!—whatever Love sings,
'Twas worth a bushel of "Plain Gold Rings"
With which the Romantic wheedles.
'Twas worth all the legs in stockings and socks—
'Twas a leg that might be put in the Stocks,
N. B.—Not the parish beadle's!

And Lady K. nid-nodded her head,
Lapped in a turban fancy-bred,
Just like a love-apple, huge and red,
Some Mussul-womanish mystery;
But whatever she meant
To represent,
She talked like the Muse of History.

She told how the filial leg was lost;
And then how much the gold one cost;
With its weight to a Trojan fraction;
And how it took off, and how it put on;
And called on Devil, Duke, and Don,
Mahomet, Moses, and Prester John,
To notice its beautiful action.

And then of the Leg she went in quest;
And led it where the light was best;
And made it lay itself up to rest
In postures for painters' studies:
It cost more tricks and trouble by half,
Than it takes to exhibit a six-legged Calf
To a boothful of country Cuddies.

Nor yet did the Heiress herself omit
The arts that help to make a hit,
And preserve a prominent station
She talked and laughed far more than her share;
And took a part in "Rich and Rare
Were the gems she wore"—and the gems were
there,
Like a Song with an illustration.

She even stood up with a Count of France
To dance—alas! the measures we dance
When Vanity plays the Piper!
Vanity, vanity, apt to betray,
And lead all sorts of legs astray,
Wood, or metal, or human clay,—
Since Satan first played the Viper!

But first she doffed her hunting-gear,
And favored Tom Tug with her golden spear,
To row with down the river—
A Bonze had her golden bow to hold;
A Hermit her belt and bugle of gold;
And an Abbot her golden quiver.

And then a space was cleared on the floor,
And she walked the Minuet de la Cour
With all the pomp of a Pompadour,
But although she began *andante*,
Conceive the faces of all the Rout,
When she finished off with a whirligig bout,
And the Precious Leg stuck stiffly out,
Like the leg of a *Figurante!*

So the courtly dance was goldenly done,
And golden opinions, of course, it won
From all different sorts of people—
Chiming, ding-dong, with flattering phrase,
In one vociferous peal of praise,
Like the peal that rings on Royal days
From Loyalty's parish-steeple.

And yet, had the leg been one of those
That dance for bread in flesh-colored hose,
With Rosina's pastoral bevy,
The jeers it had met,—the shouts! the scoff!
The cutting advice to "take itself off,"
For sounding but half so heavy.

Had it been a leg like those, perchance,
That teach little girls and boys to dance,
To set, poussette, recede, and advance,
With the steps and figures most proper—
Had it hopped for a weekly or quarterly sum,
How little of praise or grist would have come
To a mill with such a hopper!

But the Leg was none of those limbs forlorn—
Bartering capers and hops for corn—
That meet with public hisses and scorn,
Or the morning journal denounces—
Had it pleased to caper from morn till dusk,
There was all the music of "Money Musk"
In its ponderous bangs and bounces.

But hark!—as slow as the strokes of a pump,
Lump, thump!
Thump, lump!
As the Giant of Castle Otranto might stump
To a lower room from an upper—
Down she goes with a noisy dint,
For, taking the crimson turban's hint,
A noble Lord at the Head of the Mint
Is leading the Leg to supper!

But the supper, alas! must rest untold,
With its blaze of light and its glitter of gold,
For to paint that scene of glamour,
It would need the Great Enchanter's charm,
Who waves over Palace, and Cot, and Farm,
An arm like the Goldbeater's Golden Arm
That wields a Golden Hammer.

He—only He—could fitly state
The Massive Service of Golden Plate,
With the proper phrase and expansion—
The Rare Selection of Foreign Wines—
The Alps of Ice and Mountains of Pines,

Digitized by Google

The punch in OCEANS and sugary shrines,
The TEMPLE OF TASTE from GUNTER'S DESIGNS—
In short, all that WEALTH with a FEAST combines,
In a SPLENDID FAMILY MANSION.

Suffice it each masked outlandish guest
Ate and drank of the very best,
According to critical conners—
And then they pledged the Hostess and Host,
But the Golden Leg was the standing toast,
And as somebody swore,
Walked off with more
Than its share of the "Hips!" and honors!

"Miss Kilmansegg!—
Full glasses I beg!—
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg!"
And away went the bottle careering!
Wine in bumpers! and shouts in peals!
Till the Clown didn't know his head from his heels,
The Mussulman's eyes danced two-some reels,
And the Quaker was hoarse with cheering!

HER DREAM.

Miss Kilmansegg took off her leg,
And laid it down like a cribbage-peg,
For the Rout was done and the riot:
The square was hushed; not a sound was heard;
The sky was gray, and no creature stirred,
Except one little precocious bird,
That chirped—and then was quiet.

So still without—so still within;—
It had been a sin
To drop a pin—
So intense is silence after a din,
It seemed like Death's rehearsal!
To stir the air no eddy came;
And the taper burnt with as still a flame,
As to flicker had been a burning shame,
In a calm so universal.

The time for sleep has come at last;
And there was the bed, so soft, so vast,
Quite a field of Bedfordshire clover;
Sober, cooler, and calmer, no doubt,
From the piece of work just ravelled out,
For one of the pleasures of having a rout
Is the pleasure of having it over.

Nor sordid pallet, or truckle mean,
Of straw and rug, and tatters unclean;
But a splendid, gilded, carved machine,
That was fit for a Royal Chamber.
On the top was a gorgeous golden wreath;
And the damask curtains hung beneath,
Like clouds of crimson and amber.

Curtains held up by two little plump things
With golden bodies and golden wings,—
Mere fins for such solidities—
Two Cupids, in short,
Of the regular sort,
But the housemaid called them "Cupidities."

No patchwork quilt, all seams and scars,
But velvet, powdered with golden stars,
A fit mantle for *Night*-Commanders!
And the pillow, as white as snow undimmed,
And as cool as the pool that the breeze has skimmed,
Was cased in the finest cambric, and trimmed
With the costliest lace of Flanders.

And the bed—of the Eider's softest down,
'Twas a place to revel, to smother, to drown
In a bliss inferred by the Poet:
For if Ignorance be indeed a bliss,
What blessed ignorance equals this,
To sleep—and not to know it?

Oh bed! oh bed! delicious bed!
That heaven upon earth to the weary head!
But a place that to name would be ill-bred,
To the head with a wakeful trouble—
'Tis held by such a different lease!
To one, a place of comfort and peace,
All stuffed with the down of stubble geese,
To another with only the stubble!

To one a perfect Halcyon nest,
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,
And soft as the fur of the cony—
To another, so restless for body and head,
That the bed seems borrowed from Nettlebed,
And the pillow from Stratford the Stony!

To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,
To the Land of Nod, or where you please;
But alas! for the watchers and weepers,
Who turn, and turn, and turn again,
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,
With an anxious brain,
And thoughts in a train
That does not run upon *sleepers*.

Wide awake as the mousing Owl,
Night-Hawk, or other nocturnal fowl,—
But more profitless vigils keeping,—
Wide awake in the dark they stare.
Filling with phantoms the vacant air,
As if that Crook-backed Tyrant Care
Has plotted to kill them sleeping.

And oh! when the blessed diurnal light
Is quenched by the providential night,
To render our slumber more certain,
Pity, pity the wretches that weep,
For they must be wretched who cannot sleep
When God himself draws the curtain!

The careful Betty the pillow beats,
And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,
And gives the mattress a shaking—
But vainly Betty performs her part,
If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart
As well as the couch want making.

There's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,
Where other people would make preserves,
He turns his fruits into pickles:
Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,
At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,
He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way,
Tormenting himself with his prickles.

Digitized by Google

But a child—that bids the world good-night,
In downright earnest and cuts it quite—
A Cherub no Art can copy,—
'Tis a perfect picture to see him lie
As if he had supped on dormouse-pie,
(An ancient classical dish by-the-by)
With a sauce of syrup of poppy.

Oh, bed! bed! bed! delicious bed!
That heaven upon earth to the weary head,
Whether lofty or low its condition!
But instead of putting our plagues on shelves,
In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,
Or are tossed by such allegorical elves
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition!

The independent Miss Kilmansegg
Took off her independent Leg
And laid it beneath her pillow,
And then on the bed her frame she cast,
The time for repose had come at last,
But long, long, after the storm is past,
Rolls the turbid, turbulent billow.

No part she had in vulgar cares
That belong to common household affairs—
Nocturnal annoyances such as theirs
Who lie with a shrewd surmising
That while they are couchant (a bitter cup!)
Their bread and butter are getting up,
And the coals—confound them!—are rising!

No fear she had her sleep to postpone,
Like the crippled Widow who weeps alone,
And cannot make a doze her own,
For the dread that mayhap on the morrow,
The true and Christian reading to balk,
A Broker will take up her bed and walk,
By way of curing her sorrow.

No cause like these she had to bewail:
But the breath of applause had blown a gale,
And winds from that quarter seldom fail
To cause some human commotion;
But whenever such breezes coincide
With the very spring-tide
Of human pride,
There's no such swell on the ocean!

Peace, and ease, and slumber lost,
She turned, and rolled, and tumbled and tossed,
With a tumult that would not settle!
A common case, indeed, with such
As have too little, or think too much,
Of the precious and glittering metal.

Gold!—she saw at her golden foot
The Peer whose tree had an olden root,
The Proud, the Great, the Learned to boot,
The Handsome, the Gay, and the Witty—
The Man of Science—of Arms—of Art,
The man who deals but at Pleasure's mart,
And the man who deals in the City.

Gold! still gold!—and true to the mould!
In the very scheme of her dream it told;
For, by magical transmutation,
From her Leg through her body it seemed to go,
Till, gold above, and gold below,
She was gold, all gold, from her little gold toe
To her organ of Veneration!

And still she retained, through Fancy's art,
The Golden Bow, and the Golden Dart,
With which she had played a Goddess's part
In her recent glorification.
And still like one of the selfsame brood,
On a Plinth of the selfsame metal she stood
For the whole world's adoration.

And hymns of incense around her rolled,
From Golden Harps and Censers of Gold—
For Fancy in dreams is as uncontrolled
As a horse without a bridle:
What wonder, then, from all checks exempt,
If, inspired by the Golden Leg, she dreamt
She was turned to a Golden Idol?

HER COURTSHIP.

When leaving Eden's happy land
The grieving Angel led by the hand
Our banished Father and Mother,
Forgotten amid their awful doom,
The tears, the fears, and the future's gloom,
On each brow was a wreath of Paradise bloom,
That our Parents had twined for each other.

It was only while sitting like figures of stone,
For the grieving Angel had skyward flown,
As they sat, those two, in the world alone,
With disconsolate hearts nigh cloven,
That scenting the gust of happier hours,
They looked around for the precious flowers,
And lo!—a last relic of Eden's dear bowers—
The chaplet that Love had woven!

And still, when a pair of Lovers meet,
There's a sweetness in the air, unearthly sweet,
That savors still of that happy retreat
Where Eve by Adam was courted:
While the joyous Thrush, and the gentle Dove,
Wooed their mates in the boughs above,
And the Serpent, as yet, only sported.

Who hath not felt that breath in the air,
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,
When young hearts yearn together?
All sweet below, and all sunny above,
Oh! there's nothing in life like making love,
Save making hay in fine weather!

Who hath not found among his flowers
A blossom too bright for this world of ours,
Like a rose among snows of Sweden?
But to turn again to Miss Kilmansegg,
Where must Love have gone to beg,
If such a thing as a Golden Leg
Had put its foot in Eden!

And yet—to tell the rigid truth—
Her favor was sought by Age and Youth—
For the prey will find a prowler!
She was followed, flattered, courted, addressed,
Wooed, and cooed, and wheedled, and pressed,

Digitized by Google

By suitors from North, South, East, and West,
Like that Heiress, in song, Tibbie Fowler!

But, alas! alas! for the Woman's fate,
Who has from a mob to choose a mate!
'Tis a strange and painful mystery!
But the more the eggs, the worse the hatch;
The more the fish, the worse the catch;
The more the sparks, the worse the match;
Is a fact in Woman's history.

Give her between a brace to pick,
And, mayhap, with luck to help the trick,
She will take the Faustus, and leave the Old Nick—
But her future bliss to baffle,
Among a score let her have a voice,
And she'll have as little cause to rejoice,
As if she had won the "Man of her choice"
In a matrimonial raffle!

Thus, even thus, with the Heiress and Hope,
Fulfiling the adage of too much rope,
With so ample a competition,
She chose the least worthy of all the group,
Just as the Vulture makes a stoop,
And singles out from the herd or troop
The beast of the worst condition.

A Foreign Count—who came incog.,
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,
In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,
To charm some lady, British-born,
With his eyes as black as the fruit of the thorn,
And his hooky nose, and his beard half shorn,
Like a half-converted Rabbin.

And because the Sex confess a charm
In the man who has slashed a head or arm,
Or has been a throat's undoing,
He was dressed like one of the glorious trade,
At least when glory is off parade,
With a stock, and a frock, well trimmed with braid,
And frogs—that went a-wooing.

Moreover, as counts are apt to do,
On the left-hand side of his dark surtout,
At one of those holes that buttons go through,
(To be a precise recorder,)
A ribbon he wore, or rather a scrap,
About an inch of ribbon, mayhap,
That one of his rivals, a whimsical chap,
Described as his "Retail Order."

And then—and much it helped his chance—
He could sing, and play first-fiddle, and dance,
Perform charades, and Proverbs of France—
Act the tender, and do the cruel;
For among his other killing parts,
He had broken a brace of female hearts,
And murdered three men in duel!

Savage at heart, and false of tongue,
Subtle with age, and smooth to the young,
Like a snake in his coiling and curling—
Such was the Count—to give him a niche—
Who came to court that Heiress rich,
And knelt at her foot—one needn't say which—
Besieging her castle of *Sterling*.

With prayers and vows he opened his trench,
And plied her with English, Spanish, and French,
In phrases the most sentimental:
And quoted poems in High and Low Dutch,
With now and then an Italian touch,
Till she yielded without resisting much,
To homage so Continental.

And then the sordid bargain to close,
With a minature sketch of his hookey nose,
And his dear dark eyes, as black as sloes,
And his beard and whiskers as black as those,
The lady's consent he requited—
And instead of the lock that lovers beg,
The Count received from Miss Kilmansegg
A model, in small, of her Precious Leg—
And so the couple were plighted!

But, oh! the love that gold must crown!
Better—better, the love of the clown,
Who admires his lass in her Sunday gown,
As if all the fairies had dressed her!
Whose brain to no crooked thought gives birth,
Except that he never will part on earth
With his true-love's crooked tester!

Alas! for the love that's linked with gold!
Better—better, a thousand times told—
More honest, happy, and laudable,
The downright loving of pretty Cis,
Who wipes her lips, though there's nothing amiss
And takes a kiss, and gives a kiss,
In which her heart is audible!

Pretty Cis, so smiling and bright,
Who loves as she labors, with all her might,
And without any sordid leaven!
Who blushes as red as haws and hips,
Down to her very finger-tips,
For Roger's blue ribbons—to her, like strips
Cut out of the azure of heaven!

HER MARRIAGE.

'Twas morn—a most auspicious one!
From the Golden East, the Golden Sun
Came forth his glorious race to run,
Through clouds of most splendid tinges;
Clouds that lately slept in shade,
But now seemed made
Of gold brocade,
With magnificent golden fringes.

Gold above, and gold below,
The earth reflected the golden glow,
From river, and hill, and valley;
Gilt by the golden light of morn,
The Thames—it looked like the Golden Horn,
And the Barge, that carried coal or corn,
Like Cleopatra's Galley!

Bright as clusters of Golden-rod,
Suburban poplars began to nod,
With extempore splendor furnished;
While London was bright with glittering clocks.
Golden dragons, and golden cocks,
And above them all,
The dome of St. Paul,

Digitized by Google

With its Golden Cross and its Golden Ball,
Shone out as if newly burnished!

And lo! for Golden Hours and Joys,
Troops of glittering Golden Boys
Danced along with a jocund noise,
And their gilded emblems carried!
In short, 'twas the year's most Golden Day,
By mortals called the First of May,
When Miss Kilmansegg,
Of the Golden Leg,
With a Golden Ring was married!

And thousands of children, women, and men,
Counted the clock from eight till ten,
From St. James's sonorous steeple;
For next to that interesting job,
The hanging of Jack, or Bill, or Bob,
There's nothing so draws a London mob
As the noosing of very rich people.

And a treat it was for a mob to behold
The Bridal Carriage that blazed with gold!
And the Footman tall, and the Coachman bold,
In liveries so resplendent—
Coats you wondered to see in place,
They seemed so rich with golden lace,
That they might have been independent.

Coats that made those menials proud
Gaze with scorn on the dingy crowd,
From their gilded elevations;
Not to forget that saucy lad
(Ostentation's favorite cad),
The Page, who looked, so splendidly clad,
Like a Page of the "Wealth of Nations."

But the Coachman carried off the state,
With what was a Lancashire body of late
Turned into a Dresden Figure:
With a bridal Nosegay of early bloom,
About the size of a birchen broom,
And so huge a White Favor, had Gog been Groom,
He need not have worn a bigger.

And then to see the Groom! the Count
With Foreign Orders to such an amount,
And whiskers so wild—nay, bestial;
He seemed to have borrowed the shaggy hair
As well as the Stars of the Polar Bear,
To make him look celestial!

And then — Great Jove! — the struggle, the crush,
The screams, the heaving, the awful rush,
The swearing, the tearing, and fighting—
The hats and bonnets smashed like an egg—
To catch a glimpse of the Golden Leg,
Which, between the steps and Miss Kilmansegg,
Was fully displayed in alighting!

From the Golden Ankle up to the Knee,
There it was for the mob to see!
A shocking act had it chanced to be
A crooked leg or a skinny;
But although a magnificent veil she wore,
Such as never was seen before,
In case of blushes, she blushed no more
Than George the First on a guinea!

Another step, and lo! she was launched!
All in white as Brides are *blanched*,
With a wreath of most wonderful splendor—
Diamonds, and pearls, so rich in device,
That, according to calculation nice,
Her head was worth as royal a price
As the head of the Young Pretender.

Bravely she shone—and shone the more
As she sailed through the crowd of squalid and poor,
Thief, beggar, and tatterdemalion—
Led by the Count with his sloe-black eyes
Bright with triumph, and some surprise,
Like Anson on making sure of his prize,
The famous Mexican Galleon!

Anon came Lady K., with her face
Quite made up to act with grace,
But she cut the performance shorter:
For instead of pacing stately and stiff,
At the stare of the vulgar she took a miff,
And ran, full speed, into Church as if
To get married before her daughter.

But Sir Jacob walked more slowly, and bowed
Right and left to the gaping crowd,
Wherever a glance was seizable:
For Sir Jacob thought he bowed like a Guelph,
And therefore bowed to imp and elf,
And would gladly have made a bow to himself,
Had such a bow been feasible.

And last—and not the least of the sight,
Six "Handsome Fortunes," all in white,
Came to help in the marriage rite,—
And rehearse their own hymeneals;
And then the bright procession to close,
They were followed by just as many Beaux
Quite fine enough for Ideals.

Glittering men, and splendid dames,
Thus they entered the porch of St. James',
Pursued by a thunder of laughter;
For the Beadle was forced to intervene,
For Jim the Crow, and his Mayday Queen,
With her gilded ladle, and Jack i' the Green,
Would fain have followed after!

Beadle-like he hushed the shout;
But the temple was full "inside and out,"
And a buzz kept buzzing all round about
Like bees when the day is sunny—
A buzz universal that interfered
With the rite that ought to have been revered,
As if the couple already were smeared
With Wedlock's treacle and honey!

Yet Wedlock's a very awful thing!
'Tis something like that feat in the ring
Which requires good nerve to do it—
When one of a "Grand Equestrian Troop"
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop,
Not certain at all
Of what may befall
After his getting through it!

But the Count he felt the nervous work
No more than any polygamous Turk,

Digitized by Google

Or bold piratical skipper,
Who, during his buccaneering search,
Would as soon engage "a hand" in church
As a hand on board his clipper!

And how did the Bride perform her part?
Like any Bride who is cold at heart,
Mere snow with the ice's glitter;
What but a life of winter for her!
Bright but chilly, alive without stir,
So splendidly comfortless—just like a Fir
When the frost is severe and bitter.

Such were the future man and wife!
Whose bale or bliss to the end of life
A few short words were to settle—
Wilt thou have this woman?
I will—and then,
Wilt thou have this man?
I will, and Amen—
And those two were one Flesh, in the Angels' ken,
Except one Leg—that was metal.

Then the names were signed—and kissed the kiss:
And the Bride who came from her coach a Miss
As a Countess walked to her carriage—
While Hymen preened his plumes like a dove,
And Cupid fluttered his wings above,
In the shape of a fly—as little a Love
As ever looked in at a marriage!

Another crash—and away they dashed,
And the gilded carriage and footmen flashed
From the eyes of the gaping people—
Who turned to gaze at the toe-and-heel
Of the Golden Boys beginning a reel,
To the merry sound of a wedding-peal
From St. James's musical steeple.

Those wedding-bells! those wedding-bells!
How sweetly they sound in pastoral dells
From a tower in ivy-green jacket!
But town-made joys how dearly they cost;
And after all are tumbled and tost,
Like a peal from a London steeple, and lost
In town-made riot and racket.

The wedding-peal, how sweetly it peals
With grass or heather beneath our heels,—
For bells are music's laughter!—
But a London peal, well mingled, be sure,
With vulgar noises, and voices impure,
With a harsh and discordant overture
To the harmony meant to come after!

But hence with discord—perchance, too soon
To cloud the face of the honeymoon
With a dismal occultation!—
Whatever Fate's concerted trick,
The Countess and Count, at the present nick,
Have a chicken and not a crow to pick
At the sumptuous Cold Collation.

A Breakfast—no unsubstantial mess,
But one in the style of Good Queen Bess,
Who—hearty as hippocampus—
Broke her fast with ale and beef,
Instead of toast and the Chinese leaf,
And in lieu of anchovy—grampus!

A breakfast of fowl, and fish, and flesh,
Whatever was sweet, or salt, or fresh;
With wines the most rare and curious—
Wines, of the richest flavor and hue:
With fruits from the world both Old and New;
And fruits obtained before they were due
At a discount most usurious.

For wealthy palates there be, that scout
What is *in* season, for what is *out*,
And prefer all precocious savor;
For instance, early green peas, of the sort
That costs some four or five guineas a quart
Where the *Mint* is the principal flavor.

And many a wealthy man was there,
Such as the wealthy city could spare,
To put in a portly appearance—
Men whom their fathers had helped to gild;
And men who had had their fortunes to build
And—much to their credit—had richly filled
Their purses by *pursy-verance*.

Men, by popular rumor at least,
Not the last to enjoy a feast!
And truly they were not idle!
Luckier far than the chestnut tits,
Which, down at the door, stood champing their bits,
At a different sort of bridle.

For the time was come—and the whiskered Count
Helped his Bride in the carriage to mount.
And fain would the Muse deny it,
But the crowd, including two butchers in blue
(The regular killing Whitechapel hue),
Of her Precious Calf had as ample a view,
As if they had come to buy it!

Then away! away! with all the speed
That golden spurs can give to the steed—
Both Yellow Boys and Guineas, indeed,
Concurred to urge the cattle—
Away they went, with favors white,
Yellow jackets, and panels bright,
And left the mob, like a mob at night,
Agape at the sound of a rattle.

Away! away! they rattled and rolled,
The Count, and his Bride and her Leg of Gold—
That faded charm to the charmer!
Away—through Old Brentford rang the din,
Of wheels and heels on their way to win
That hill, named after one of her kin,
The Hill of the Golden Farmer!

Gold, still Gold—it flew like dust!
It tipped the post-boy, and paid the trust;
In each open palm it was freely thrust;
There was nothing but giving and taking
And if gold could ensure the future hour,
What hopes attended that Bride to her bower,
But alas! even hearts with a four-horse power
Of opulence end in breaking!

Digitized by Google

HER HONEYMOON.

The moon—the moon, so silver and cold,
Her fickle temper has often been told,
  Now shady—now bright and sunny—
But of all the lunar things that change,
The one that shows most fickle and strange
And takes the most eccentric range
  Is the moon—so called—of honey!

To some a full-grown orb revealed,
As big and as round as Norval's shield,
  And as bright as a burner Bude-lighted;
To others as dull, and dingy, and damp,
As any oleaginous lamp,
Of the regular old parochial stamp,
  In a London fog-benighted.

To the loving, a bright and constant sphere,
That makes earth's commonest things appear
  All poetic, romantic, and tender;
Hanging with jewels a cabbage-stump,
And investing a common post, or pump,
A currant-bush, or a gooseberry-clump,
  With a halo of dreamlike splendor.

A sphere such as shone from Italian skies,
In Juliet's dear, dark, liquid eyes,
  Tipping trees with its argent braveries—
And to couples not favored with Fortune's boons
One of the most delightful of moons,
For it brightens their pewter platters and spoons
  Like a silver service of Savory's!

For all is bright, and beauteous, and clear,
And the meanest thing most precious and dear,
  When the magic of love is present:
Love that lends a sweetness and grace
To the humblest spot and the plainest face—
That turns Wilderness Row into Paradise Place,
  And Garlick Hill to Mount Pleasant!

Love that sweetens sugarless tea,
And makes contentment and joy agree
  With the coarsest boarding and bedding;
Love that no golden ties can attach,
But nestles under the humblest thatch,
And will fly away from an Emperor's match
  To dance at a Penny Wedding!

Oh, happy, happy, thrice-happy state,
When such a bright Planet governs the fate
  Of a pair of united lovers!
'Tis theirs, in spite of the Serpent's hiss,
To enjoy the pure primeval kiss,
With as much of the old original bliss
  As mortality ever recovers!

There's strength in double joints, no doubt,
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout,
That the single sorts know nothing about—
  And a fist is strongest when doubled—
And double aqua-fortis, of course,
And double soda-water, perforce,
  Are the strongest that ever bubbled!

There's double beauty whenever a Swan
Swims on a Lake, with her double thereon;
And ask the gardener, Luke or John,
  Of the beauty of double-blowing—
A double dahlia delights the eye;
And it's far the loveliest sight in the sky
  When a double rainbow is glowing!

There's warmth in a pair of double soles;
As well as a double allowance of coals—
  In a coat that is double-breasted—
In double windows and double doors:
And a double U wind is blest by scores
  For its warmth to the tender-chested.

There's twofold sweetness in double pipes,
And a double barrel and double snipes
  Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure;
There's double safety in double locks;
And double letters bring cash for the box;
And all the world knows that double knocks
  Are gentility's double measure.

There's a double sweetness in double rhymes,
And a double at Whist, and a double Times
  In profit are certainly double—
By doubling, the Hare contrives to escape:
And all seamen delight in a doubled Cape,
  And a double-reefed topsail in trouble.

There's a double chuck at a double chin,
And of course, there's a double pleasure therein,
  If the parties are brought to telling:
And however our Dennises take offence,
A double meaning shows double sense;
  And if proverbs tell truth,
  A double tooth
  Is wisdom's adopted dwelling!

But double wisdom, and pleasure, and sense,
Beauty, respect, strength, comfort, and thence
  Through whatever the list discovers,
They are all in the double blessedness summed,
Of what was formerly double-drummed,
  The Marriage of two true Lovers!

Now the Kilmansegg Moon—it must be told—
Though instead of silver it tipped with gold—
Shone rather wan, and distant and cold,
  And before its days were at thirty,
Such gloomy clouds began to collect,
With an onimous ring of ill effect,
As gave but too much cause to expect
  Such weather as seamen call dirty!

And yet the moon was the "Young May Moon,"
And the scented hawthorn had blossomed soon,
  And the thrush and the blackbird were singing—
The snow-white lambs were skipping in play,
And the bee was humming a tune all day
To flowers as welcome as flowers in May,
  And the trout in the stream was springing!

But what were the hues of the blooming earth,
Its scents—its sounds—or the music and mirth
  Or its furred or its feathered creatures,
To a pair in the world's last sordid stage,
Who had never looked into Nature's page,
And had strange ideas of a Golden Age,
  Without any Arcadian features?

Digitized by Google

And what were joys of the pastoral kind
To a Bride—town-made—with a heart and mind
With simplicity ever at battle?
A Bride of an ostentatious race,
Who, thrown in the Golden Farmer's place,
Would have trimmed her shepherds with golden lace,
And gilt the horns of her cattle.

She could not please the pigs with her whim,
And the sheep wouldn't cast their eyes at a limb
For which she had been such a martyr:
The deer in the park, and the colts at grass,
And the cows unheeded let it pass;
And the ass on the common was such an ass,
That he wouldn't have swapped
The thistle he cropped
For her Leg, including the Garter!

She hated lanes, and she hated fields—
She hated all that the country yields—
And barely knew turnips from clover;
She hated walking in any shape,
And a country stile was an awkward scrape,
Without the bribe of a mob to gape
At the Leg in clambering over!

O blessed Nature, "O rus! O rus!"
Who cannot sigh for the country thus,
Absorbed in worldly torpor—
Who does not yearn for its meadow-sweet breath,
Untainted by care, and crime, and death,
And to stand sometimes upon grass or heath—
That soul, spite of gold, is a pauper!

But to hail the pearly advent of morn,
And relish the odor fresh from the thorn,
She was far too pampered a madam—
Or to joy in the daylight waxing strong,
While, after ages of sorrow and wrong,
The scorn of the proud, the misrule of the strong,
And all the woes that to man belong,
The lark still carols the selfsame song
That he did to the uncurst Adam!

The lark! she had given all Leipsic's flocks
For a Vauxhall tune in a musical box;
And as for the birds in the thicket,
Thrush or ousel in leafy niche,
The linnet or finch, she was far too rich
To care for a Morning Concert to which
She was welcome without any ticket.

Gold! still gold, her standard of old,
All pastoral joys were tried by gold,
Or by fancies golden and crural—
Till ere she had passed one week unblest,
As her agricultural Uncle's guest,
Her mind was made up and fully impressed
That felicity could not be rural!

And the Count?—to the snow-white lambs at play,
And all the scents and the sights of May,
And the birds that warbled their passion,
His ears, and dark eyes, and decided nose,
Were as deaf, and as blind, and as dull as those
That overlook the Bouquet de Rose,
The Huile Antique,
And Parfum Unique,
In a Barber's Temple of Fashion.

To tell, indeed, the true extent
Of his rural bias so far it went
As to covet estates in ring fences—
And for rural lore he had learned in town
That the country was green turned up with brown,
And garnished with trees that a man might cut down
Instead of his own expenses.

And yet had that thought been his only one,
The Pair might have had few quarrels or none,
For their tastes thus far were in common;
But faults he had that a haughty bride
With a Golden Leg could hardly abide—
Faults that would even have roused the pride
Of a far less metalsome woman!

It was early days indeed for a wife,
In the very spring of her married life,
To be chilled by its wintry weather—
But instead of sitting as Love-Birds do,
Or Hymen's Turtles that bill and coo—
Enjoying their "moon and honey for two,"
They were scarcely seen together!

In vain she sat with her Precious Leg
A little exposed *à la* Kilmansegg,
And rolled her eyes in their sockets!
He left her in spite of her tender regards,
And those loving murmurs described by bards,
For the rattling of dice and the shuffling of cards,
And the poking of balls into pockets!

Moreover, he loved the deepest stake
And the heaviest bets the players would make;
And he drank—the reverse of sparely—
And he used strange curses that made her fret:
And when he played with herself at piquet,
She found to her cost,
For she always lost,
That the Count did not count quite fairly.

And then came dark mistrust and doubt,
Gathered by worming his secrets out,
And slips in his conversations—
Fears, which all her peace destroyed,
That his title was null—his coffers were void—
And his French Château was in Spain, or enjoyed
The most airy of situations.

But still his heart—if he had such a part—
She—only she—might possess his heart,
And hold his affections in fetters—
Alas! that hope, like a crazy ship,
Was forced its anchor and cable to slip
When, seduced by her fears, she took a dip
In his private papers and letters:

Letters that told of dangerous leagues;
And notes that hinted as many intrigues
As the Count's in the "Barber of Seville"—
In short such mysteries came to light,
That the Countess-Bride, on the thirtieth night,

Digitized by Google

Woke and started up in affright,
And kicked and screamed with all her might,
And finally fainted away outright,
For she dreamed she had married the Devil!

HER MISERY.

Who hath not met with home-made bread,
A heavy compound of putty and lead—
And home-made wines that rack the head,
And home-made liquors and waters?
Home-made pop that will not foam,
And home-made dishes that drive one from home,
Not to name each mess,
For the face or dress,
Home-made by the homely daughters?

Home-made physic, that sickens the sick;
Thick for thin and thin for thick;—
In short each homogeneous trick
For poisoning domesticity?
And since our Parents, called the First,
A little family squabble nurst,
Of all our evils the worst of the worst
Is home-made infelicity.

There's a Golden Bird that claps its wings,
And dances for joy on its perch, and sings
With a Persian exultation:
For the Sun is shining into the room,
And brightens up the carpet-bloom,
As if it were new, bran new from the loom,
Or the lone Nun's fabrication.

And thence the glorious radiance flames
On pictures in massy gilded frames—
Enshrining, however, no painted Dames,
But portraits of colts and fillies—,
Pictures hanging on walls which shine,
In spite of the bard's familiar line,
With clusters of "gilded lilies."

And still the flooding sunlight shares
Its lustre with gilded sofas and chairs,
That shine as if freshly burnished—
And gilded tables, with glittering stocks,
Of gilded china, and golden clocks,
Toy, and trinket, and musical box,
That Peace and Paris have furnished.

And lo! with the brightest gleam of all
The glowing sunbeam is seen to fall
On an object as rare as splendid—
The golden foot of the Golden Leg
Of the Countess—once Miss Kilmansegg—
But there all sunshine is ended.

Her cheek is pale, and her eye is dim,
And downward cast, yet not at the limb,
Once the centre of all speculation;
But downward drooping in comfort's dearth,
As gloomy thoughts are drawn to the earth—
Whence human sorrows derive their birth—
By a moral gravitation.

Her golden hair is out of its braids,
And her sighs betray the gloomy shades
That her evil planet revolves in—
And tears are falling that catch a gleam
So bright as they drop in the sunny beam,
That tears of *aqua regia* they seem,
The water that gold dissolves in!

Yet, not in filial grief were shed
Those tears for a mother's insanity;
Nor yet because her father was dead,
For the bowing Sir Jacob had bowed his head,
To Death—with his usual urbanity;
The waters that down her visage rilled
Were drops of unrectified spirit distilled
From the limbec of Pride and Vanity.

Tears that fell alone and unchecked,
Without relief, and without respect,
Like the fabled pearls that the pigs neglect,
When pigs have that opportunity—
And of all the griefs that mortals share,
The one that seems the hardest to bear
Is the grief without community.

How blessed the heart that has a friend
A sympathizing ear to lend
To troubles too great to smother!
For as ale and porter, when flat, are restored
Till a sparkling bubbling head they afford,
So sorrow is cheered by being poured
From one vessel into another.

But friend or gossip she had not one
To hear the vile deeds that the Count had done,
How night after night he rambled;
And how she had learned by sad degrees
That he drank, and smoked, and worse than these,
That he "swindled, intrigued, and gambled."

How he kissed the maids, and sparred with John,
And came to bed with his garments on;
With other offences as heinous—
And brought *strange* gentlemen home to dine,
That he said were in the Fancy Line,
And they fancied spirits instead of wine,
And called her lap-dog "Wenus!"

Of "making a book" how he made a stir,
But never had written a line to her,
Once his Idol and Cara Sposa:
And how he had stormed and treated her ill,
Because she refused to go down to a mill,
She didn't know where, but remembered still
That the Miller's name was Mendoza.

How he often waked her up at night,
And oftener still by the morning light,
Reeling home from his haunts unlawful;
Singing songs that shouldn't be sung,
Except by beggars and thieves unhung—
Or volleying oaths, that a foreign tongue
Made still more horrid and awful!

How oft, instead of otto of rose,
With vulgar smells he offended her nose,
From gin, tobacco, and onion!
And then how wildly he used to stare!
And shake his fist at nothing, and swear—
And pluck by the handful his shaggy hair,

Digitized by Google

Till he looked like a study of Giant Despair
For a new Edition of Bunyan!

For dice will run the contrary way,
As well is known to all who play,
And cards will conspire as in treason:
And what with keeping a hunting-box,
Following fox—
Friends in flocks,
Burgundies, Hocks,
From London Docks;
Stultz's frocks,
Manton and Nock's
Barrels and locks,
Shooting blue rocks,
Trainers and jocks,
Buskins and socks,
Pugilistical knocks,
And fighting-cocks,
If he found himself short in funds and stocks,
These rhymes will furnish the reason.

His friends, indeed, were falling away—
Friends who insist on play or pay—
And he feared at no very distant day
To be cut by Lord and by cadger,
As one who has gone or is going to smash,
For his checks no longer drew the cash,
Because, as his comrades explained in flash,
"He had overdrawn his badger."

Gold! gold—alas! for the gold
Spent where souls were bought and sold,
In Vice's Walpurgis revel!
Alas! for muffles, and bulldogs, and guns,
The leg that walks, and the leg that runs,
All real evils, though Fancy ones,
When they lead to debt, dishonor, and duns,
Nay, to death, and perchance the devil!

Alas! for the last of the Golden race!
Had she cried her wrongs in the market-place,
She had warrant for all her clamor—
For the worst of rogues, and brutes, and rakes,
Was breaking her heart by constant aches,
With as little remorse as the pauper who breaks
A flint with a parish hammer!

HER LAST WILL.

Now the Precious Leg while cash was flush,
Or the Count's acceptance worth a rush,
Had never excited dissension;
But no sooner the stocks began to fall,
Than, without any ossification at all,
The limb became what people call
A perfect bone of contention.

For altered days brought altered ways,
And instead of the complimentary phrase,
So current before her bridal—
The Countess heard, in language low,
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,
A good 'un to look at but bad to go,
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

That instead of playing musical airs,
Like Colin's foot in going up-stairs—
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares—
It made an infernal stumping.
Whereas a member of cork, or wood,
Would be lighter and cheaper and quite as good,
Without the unbearable thumping.

Perhaps she thought it a decent thing
To show her calf to cobbler and king,
But nothing could be absurder—
While none but the crazy would advertise
Their gold before their servants' eyes,
Who of course some night would make it a prize,
By a Shocking and Barbarous Murder.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,
The Leg kept its situation:
For legs are not to be taken off
By a verbal amputation.
And mortals when they take a whim,
The greater the folly the stiffer the limb
That stands upon it or by it—
So the Countess, then Miss Kilmansegg,
At her marriage refused to stir a peg,
Till the Lawyers had fastened on her Leg,
As fast as the Law could tie it.

Firmly then—and more firmly yet—
With scorn for scorn, and with threat for threat,
The Proud One confronted the Cruel:
And loud and bitter the quarrel arose,
Fierce and merciless—one of those,
With spoken daggers, and looks like blows,
In all but the bloodshed a duel!

Rash, and wild, and wretched, and wrong,
Were the words that came from Weak and Strong,
Till maddened for desperate matters,
Fierce as tigress escaped from her den,
She flew to her desk—'twas opened—and then,
In the time it takes to try a pen,
Or the clerk to utter his slow Amen,
Her Will was in fifty tatters!

But the Count, instead of curses wild,
Only nodded his head and smiled,
As if at the spleen of an angry child;
But the calm was deceitful and sinister!
A lull like the lull of the treacherous sea—
For Hate in that moment had sworn to be
The Golden Leg's sole Legatee,
And that very night to administer!

HER DEATH.

'Tis a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave without any misgiving:
And yet in this slippery world of strife,
In the stir of human bustle so rife,
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life
Is dying, and Death is living!

Ay, Beauty the Girl, and Love the Boy,
Bright as they are with hope and joy,
How their souls would sadden instanter,
To remember that one of those wedding bells,

Digitized by Google

Which ring so merrily though the dells,
Is the same that knells
Our last farewells,
Only broken into a canter!

But breath and blood set doom at nought—
How little the wretched Countess thought,
When at night she unloosed her sandal,
That the Fates had woven her burial-cloth,
And that Death, in the shape of a Death's-Head Moth,
'Vas fluttering round her candle!

As she looked at her clock of or-molu,
For the hours she had gone so wearily through
At the end of a day of trial—
How little she saw in her pride of prime
The dart of Death in the Hand of Time—
That hand which moved on the dial!

As she went with her taper up the stair,
How little her swollen eye was aware
That the Shadow which followed was double!
Or when she closed her chamber-door,
It was shutting out, and for evermore,
The world—and its worldly trouble!

Little she dreamed, as she laid aside
Her jewels—after one glance of pride—
They were solemn bequests to Vanity—
Or when her robes she began to doff
That she stood so near to the putting off
Of the flesh that clothes humanity.

And when she quenched the taper's light,
How little she thought as the smoke took flight,
That her day was done—and merged in a night
Of dreams and duration uncertain—
Or, along with her own,
That a Hand of Bone
Was closing mortality's curtain!

But life is sweet, and mortality blind,
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind
In concealing the day of sorrow;
And enough is the present tense of toil—
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil—
And the mind flies back with a glad recoil
From the debts not due till to-morrow.

Wherefore else does the spirit fly
And bids its daily cares good-bye,
Along with its daily clothing?
Just as the felon condemned to die—
With a very natural loathing—
Leaving the Sheriff to dream of ropes,
From his gloomy cell in a vision elopes,
To caper on sunny greens and slopes,
Instead of the dance upon nothing.

Thus, even thus, the Countess slept,
While Death still nearer and nearer crept,
Like the Thane who smote the sleeping—
But her mind was busy with early joys,
Her golden treasures and golden toys,
That flashed a bright
And golden light
Under lids still red with weeping.

The golden doll that she used to hug!
Her coral of gold, and the golden mug!
Her godfather's golden presents!
The golden service she had at her meals,
The golden watch, and chain, and seals,
Her golden scissors, and thread, and reels,
And her golden fishes and pheasants!

The golden guineas in siken purse—
And the Golden Legends she heard from her nurse,
Of the Mayor in his gilded carriage—
And London streets that were paved with gold—
And the Golden Eggs that were laid of old—
With each golden thing
To the golden ring
At her own auriferous Marriage!

And still the golden light of the sun
Through her golden dream appeared to run,
Though the night that roared without was one
To terrify seamen or gypsies—
While the moon, as if in malicious mirth,
Kept peeping down at the ruffled earth,
As though she enjoyed the tempest's birth,
In revenge of her old eclipses.

But vainly, vainly, the thunder fell,
For the soul of the Sleeper was under a spell
That time had lately embittered—
The Count, as once at her foot he knelt—
That foot which now he wanted to melt!
But—hush!—'twas a stir at her pillow she felt—
And some object before her glittered.

'Twas the Golden Leg!—she knew its gleam!
And up she started, and tried to scream—
But even in the moment she started—
Down came the limb with a frightful smash,
And, lost in the universal flash
That her eyeballs made at so mortal a crash,
The Spark, called Vital, departed!

* * * * *

Gold, still gold! hard, yellow, and cold,
For gold she had lived, and she died for gold—
By a golden weapon—not oaken:
In the morning they found her all alone—
Stiffy, and bloody, and cold as stone—
But her Leg, the Golden Leg, was gone,
And the "Golden Bowl was broken!"

Gold—still gold! it haunted her yet—
At the Golden Lion the Inquest met—
Its foreman, a carver and gilder—
And the Jury debated from twelve till three
What the Verdict ought to be,
And they brought it in as Felo-de-Se,
"Because her own Leg had killed her!"

HER MORAL.

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled;
Heavy to get, and light to hold;
Hoarded, bartered, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled:

Digitized by Google

Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould—
Price of many a crime untold:
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Good or bad a thousand-fold!
How widely its agencies vary—
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamped with the image of Good Queen Bess,
And now of a bloody Mary.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

PART I.

Some dreams we have are nothing else but dreams,
Unnatural and full of contradictions;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground;
It might be merely by a thought's expansion;
But in the spirit, or the flesh, I found
An old deserted Mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling-place—and yet no habitation;
A House—but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jarred by the gusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small;
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirred, to go or come,
No face looked forth from shut or open casement;
No chimney smoked—there was no sign of Home
From parapet to basement.

With shattered panes the grassy court was starred;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after;
And through the ragged roof the sky shone, barred
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

The flower grew wild and rankly as the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed
Had overgrown the dial.

But gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the Porch, she found
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough;
And on the lawn—within its turfy mound—
The rabbit made his burrow.

The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted through
The shrubby clumps, and frisked, and sat, and vanished,
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banished.

The wary crow—the pheasant from the woods—
Lulled by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the Mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a "shocking tameness."

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted.

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard, except, from far away,
The ringing of the Whitwall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmured after.

But Echo never mocked the human tongue!
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,
A secret curse on that old building hung,
And its deserted Garden.

The beds were all untouched by hand or tool;
No footstep marked the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool,
For want of human travel.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,
Drooped from the wall with which they used to grapple;
And on the cankered tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple.

But awfully the truant shunned the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring Poacher;
In spite of gaps that through the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

The pear and quince lay squandered on the grass:
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums—a Wilderness it was
Of fruits, and weeds, and flowers!

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose-bush in its ramble,

Digitized by Google

The thistle and the stock together grew,
The hollyhock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced,
The sturdy burdock choked its slender neighbor,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effaced
Of human care and labor.

The very yew Formality had trained
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regained
The raggedness of nature.

The Fountain was a-dry—neglect and time
Had marred the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawled in the ruined bason.

The Statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,
Lay like the Idol of some bygone race,
Its name and rites forgotten.

On every side the aspect was the same
All ruined, desolate, forlorn, and savage:
No hand or foot within the precinct came
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

PART II.

Oh, very gloomy is the House of Woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling!

Oh, very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The Corpse lies on the trestles!

But House of Woe, and hearse, and sable pall,
The narrow home of the departed mortal,
Ne'er looked so gloomy as that Ghostly Hall,
With its deserted portal!

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,
And in its winding-sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood,
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And marched in search of their diurnal food
In undisturbed procession.

As undisturbed as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue,
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

Howbeit, the door I pushed—or so I dreamed—
Which slowly, slowly gaped—the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dull within that Mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners
That hung from the corroded walls, and told
Of former men and manners.

Those tattered flags, that with the open door,
Seemed the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out—bird after bird—
The screechowl overhead began to flutter,
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter!

A shriek that echoed from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murther!

Meanwhile the rusty armor rattled round,
The banner shuddered, and the ragged streamer—
All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung and belt,
Stirred as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The bloodhound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And through its many gaps of destitution
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,
Touched by some impulse occult or mechanic;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Suddenly turned, and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall,
Assuming features solemn and terrific,
Hinted some tragedy of that old Hall,
Locked up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might perchance have solved the doubt,
Where, among those flags so dull and livid,
The banner of the BLOODY HAND shone out,
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver;
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted

Digitized by Google

And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

If but a rat had lingered in the house,
To lure the thought into a social channel!
But not a rat remained, or tiny mouse,
To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops rolled down the walls as if they wept;
And where the cricket used to chirp so shrilly,
The toad was squatting and the lizard crept
On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
Or glanced on coat of buff or knightly metal;
The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,—
The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
The fungus in the rotten seams had quickened;
While on the oaken table coats of dust
Perennially had thickened.

No mark of leathern jack or metal can,
No cup—no horn—no hospitable token—
All social ties between that board and Man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so foul a rumor in the air,
The shadow of a Presence so atrocious;
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

PART III.

'Tis hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from inpulse only—
But some internal prompting bade me mount
The gloomy stairs and lonely.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,
With odors as from bones and relics carnal,
Deprived of rite and consecrated mould,
The chapel-vault or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of every step so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick—and in the upper gloom
The bat—or something in its shape—was winging;
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,
The Death's-Head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly;
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning bluely.

Such omens in the place there seemed to be,
At every crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some Apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted.

Yet no portentous Shape the sight amazed;
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid;
But from their tarnished frames dark Figures gazed,
And Faces spectre-pallid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of Art's simulation;
Their souls were looking through their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On every lip a speechless horror dwelt;
On every brow the burthen of affliction;
The old Ancestral Spirits knew and felt
The House's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirred, or sighed, or wept, or spoken:
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary chamber.
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber.

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnished
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date,
And carvings gilt and burnished.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art,
With Scripture history, or classic fable;
But all had faded save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marred the tissue with a partial ravage;
But undecaying frowned upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt;
Some hues were fresh, and some decayed and duller;
But still the BLOODY HAND shone strangely out
With vehemence of color!

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken.

Digitized by Google

The Bloody Hand, significant of crime,
That, glaring on the old heraldic banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,
In such a wondrous manner!

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

The Death-Watch ticked behind the panelled oak,
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,
The fancy to embarrass.

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,
But through one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said,
That Chamber is the Ghostly!

Across the door no gossamer festoon
Swung pendulous—no web—no dusty fringes,
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunned the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banished,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom
The very midge had vanished.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a Bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the Bloody Hand in burning red
Embroidered on the curtain.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt—
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted;
The floor alone retained the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With mazy doubles to the grated casement—
Oh what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?
Had sought the door, the window, in his flight,
Striving for dear existence?

What shrieking Spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted?—
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly Shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly,
It hardly veiled the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted!

A FAIRY TALE.

On Hounslow Heath—and close beside the road,
As western travellers may oft have seen—
A little house some years ago there stood,
A minikin abode;
And built like Mr. Birbeck's, all of wood;
The walls of white, the window-shutters green;—
Four wheels it had at North, South, East, and West,
(Though now at rest)
On which it used to wander to-and-fro,
Because its masters ne'er maintained a rider,
Like those who trade in Paternoster Row;
But made his business travel for itself,
Till he had made his pelf,
And then retired—if one may call it so,
Of a roadsider.

Perchance, the very race and constant riot
Of stages, long and short, which thereby ran,
Made him more relish the repose and quiet
Of his now sedentary caravan;
Perchance, he loved the ground because 'twas common,
And so he might impale a strip of soil,
That furnished, by his toil,
Some dusty greens, for him and his old woman;—
And five tall hollyhocks, in dingy flower.
Howbeit, the thoroughfare did no ways spoil
His peace,—unless, in some unlucky hour,
A stray horse came and gobbled up his bower!

But, tired of always looking at the coaches,
The same to come,—when they had seen them one day!
And, used to brisker life, both man and wife
Began to suffer N-U-E's approaches,
And feel retirement like a long wet Sunday,—
So, having had some quarters of School-breeding,
They turned themselves, like other folk, to reading;
But setting out where others nigh have done,
And being ripened in the seventh stage,
The childhood of old age,
Began, as other children have begun,—
Not with the pastorals of Mr. Pope,
Or Bard of Hope,
Or Paley ethical, or learned Porson,—
But spelt on Sabbaths, in St. Mark, or John,
And then relaxed themselves with Whittington,
Or Valentine and Orson—
But chiefly fairy tales they loved to con,
And being easily melted, in their dotage,
Slobbered,—and kept
Reading,—and wept
Over the White Cat, in their wooden cottage.

Thus reading on—the longer
They read of course, their childish faith grew stronger
In Gnomes, and Hags, and Elves, and Giants grim,—
If talking Trees and Birds revealed to him,
She saw the flight of Fairyland's fly-wagons;
And magic-fishes swim

Digitized by Google

In puddle-ponds, and took old crows for dragons,—
Both were quite drunk from the enchanted flagons;
When, as it fell upon a summer's day,
As the old man sat a-feeding
On the old babe-reading,
Beside his open street-and-parlor door,
A hideous roar
Proclaimed a drove of beasts was coming by the way.

Long horned, and short, of many a different breed,
Tall, tawny brutes, from famous Lincoln-levels,
Or Durham feed,
With some of those unquiet black dwarf devils
From nether side of Tweed,
Or Firth of Forth;
Looking half wild with joy to leave the North,—
With dusty hides, all mobbing on together,—
When,—whether from a fly's malicious comment
Upon his tender flank, from which he shrank;
Or whether
Only in some enthusiastic moment,—
However, one brown monster, in a frisk,
Giving his tail a perpendicular whisk,
Kicked out a passage through the beastly rabble;
And after a pas seul,—or, if you will, a
Horn-pipe before the Basket-maker's villa,
Leaped o'er the tiny pale,—
Backed his beef-steaks against the wooden gable,
And thrust his brawny bell-rope of a tail
Right o'er the page,
Wherein the sage
Just then was spelling some romantic fable.

The old man, half a scholar, half a dunce,
Could not peruse,—who could?—two tales at once;
And being huffed
At what he knew was none of Riquet's Tuft,
Banged-to the door,
But most unluckily enclosed a morsel
Of the intruding tail, and all the tassel,—
The monster gave a roar,
And bolting off with speed, increased by pain,
The little house became a coach once more,
And, like Macheath, "took to the road" again!

Just then, by Fortune's whimsical decree,
The ancient woman stooping with her crupper,
Towards sweet home, or where sweet home should be,
Was getting up some household herbs for supper;
Thoughtful of Cinderella, in the tale,
And quaintly wondering if magic shifts
Could o'er a common pumpkin so prevail,
To turn it to a coach,—what pretty gifts
Might come of cabbages, and curly kale:
Meanwhile she never heard her old man's wail,
Nor turned, till home had turned a corner, quite
Gone out of sight!

At last, conceive her, rising from the ground,
Weary of sitting on her russet clothing;
And looking round
Where rest was to be found,
There was no house—no villa there—no nothing!
No house!
The change was quite amazing;
It made her senses stagger for a minute,
The riddle's explication seemed to harden;
But soon her superannuated *nous*
Explained the horrid mystery;—and raising
Her hand to heaven, with the cabbage in it,
On which she meant to sup,—
"Well! this *is* Fairy Work! I'll bet a farden,
Little Prince Silverwings has ketched me up,
And set me down in some one else's garden!"

A NOCTURNAL SKETCH.

A NEW STYLE OF BLANK VERSE.

Even is come; and from the dark Park hark,
The signal of the setting sun—one gun!
And six is sounding from the chime, prime time
To go and see the Drury-Lane Dane slain,—
Or hear Othello's jealous doubt spout out,—
Or Macbeth raving at that shade-made blade,
Denying to his frantic clutch much touch;—
Or else to see Ducrow with wide stride ride
Four horses as no other man can span;
Or in the small Olympic Pit, sit split
Laughing at Liston, while you quiz his phiz.

Anon Night comes, and with her wings brings things
Such as, with his poetic tongue, Young sung;
The gas up-blazes with its bright white light,
And paralytic watchmen prowl, howl, growl,
About the streets and take up Pall-Mall Sal,
Who, hasting to her nightly jobs, robs fobs.
Now thieves to enter for your cash, smash, crash,
Past drowsy Charley, in a deep sleep, creep,
But frightened by Policeman B. 3, flee,
And while they're going, whisper low,
"No go!"

Now puss, while folks are in their beds, treads leads,
And sleepers waking, grumble—"Drat that cat!"
Who in the gutter caterwauls, squalls, mauls,
Some feline foe, and screams in shrill ill-will.

Now Bulls of Bashan, of a prize size, rise
In childish dreams, and with a roar gore poor
Georgy, or Charley, or Billy, willy-nilly;—
But Nursemaid in a nightmare's rest, chest-pressed,
Dreameth of one of her old flames, James Games,
And that she hears—what faith is man's!—Ann's banns
And his, from Reverend Mr. Rice, twice, thrice;
White ribbons flourish, and a stout shout out,
That upward goes, shows Rose knows those bows' woes!

Digitized by Google

NUMBER ONE.

VERSIFIED FROM THE PROSE OF A YOUNG LADY.

It's very hard!—and so it is,
To live in such a row,—
And witness this that every Miss
But me, has got a Beau,—
For Love goes calling up and down,
But here he seems to shun;
I'm sure he has been asked enough
To call at Number One!

I'm sick of all the double knocks
That come to Number Four!—
At Number Three, I often see
A lover at the door;—
And one in blue, at Number Two,
Calls daily like a dun,—
It's very hard they come so near
And not to Number One!

Miss Bell I hear has got a dear
Exactly to her mind,—
By sitting at the window-pane
Without a bit of blind;—
But I go in the balcony,
Which she has never done,
Yet arts that thrive at Number Five
Don't take at Number One!

'Tis hard with plenty in the street,
And plenty passing by,—
There's nice young men at Number Ten,
But only rather shy;—
And Mrs. Smith across the way
Has got a grown-up son,
But la! he hardly seems to know
There is a Number One!

There's Mr. Wick at Number Nine,
But he's intent on pelf,
And though he's pious, will not love
His neighbor as himself,—
At Number Seven there was a sale—
The goods had quite a run!
And here I've got my single lot
On hand at Number One!

My mother often sits at work
And talks of props and stays,
And what a comfort I shall be
In her declining days:—
The very maids about the house
Have set me down a nun,
The sweethearts all belong to them
That call at Number One!

Once only when the flue took fire,
On Friday afternoon,
Young Mr. Long came kindly in
And told me not to swoon:—
Why can't he come again without
The Phœnix and the Sun!—
We cannot always have a flue
On fire at Number One!

I am not old! I am not plain!
Nor awkward in my gait—
I am not crooked, like the bride
That went from Number Eight:—
I'm sure white satin made her look
As brown as any bun—
But even beauty has no chance,
I think, at Number One!

At Number Six they say Miss Rose
Has slain a score of hearts,
And Cupid, for her sake, has been
Quite prodigal of darts,
The Imp they show with bended bow,
I wish he had a gun!—
But if he had, he'd never deign
To shoot with Number One.

It 's very hard, and so it is
To live in such a row!
And here's a ballad-singer come
To aggravate my woe;—
Oh take away your foolish song
And tones enough to stun—
There is "Nae luck about the house,"
I know, at Number One!

EPICUREAN REMINISCENCES OF A SENTIMENTALIST.

"My *Tables!* *Meat* it is, *I set it* down!"
Hamlet.

I THINK it was Spring—but not certain I am—
When my passion began first to work;
But I know we were certainly looking for lamb,
And the season was over for pork.

'Twas at Christmas, I think, when I met with Miss Chase,
Yes—for Morris had asked me to dine—
And I thought I had never beheld such a face,
Or so noble a turkey and chine.

Placed close by her side, it made others quite wild,
With sheer envy to witness my luck;
How she blushed as I gave her some turtle, and smiled
As I afterward offered some duck!

I looked and I languished, alas! to my cost,
Through three courses of dishes and meats;
Getting deeper in love—but my heart was quite lost,
When it came to the trifle and sweets!

With a rent-roll that told of my houses and land,
To her parents I told my designs—
And then to herself I presented my hand,
With a very fine pottle of pines!

I asked her to have me for weal or for woe,
And she did not object in the least;—
I can't tell the date—but we married, I know,
Just in time to have game at the feast.

We went to ——, it certainly was the seaside;
For the next, the most blessed of morns,

Digitized by Google

I remember how fondly I gazed at my bride,
Sitting down to a plateful of prawns.

Oh never may memory lose sight of that year,
But still hallow the time as it ought,
That season the "grass" was remarkably dear,
And the peas at a guinea a quart.

So happy, like hours, all our days seemed to haste,
A fond pair, such as poets have drawn,
So united in heart—so congenial in taste,
We were both of us partial to brawn!

A long life I looked for of bliss with my bride,
But then Death—I ne'er dreamt about that!
Oh, there's nothing is certain in life, as I cried,
When my turbot eloped with the cat!

My dearest took ill at the turn of the year,
But the cause no physician could nab;
But something it seemed like consumption, I fear,
It was just after supping on crab.

In vain she was doctored, in vain she was dosed,
Still her strength and her appetite pined;
She lost relish for what she had relished the most,
Even salmon she deeply declined.

For months still I lingered in hope and in doubt,
While her form it grew wasted and thin;
But the last dying spark of existence went out,
As the oysters were just coming in!

She died, and she left me the saddest of men
To indulge in a widower's moan,
Oh, I felt all the power of solitude then,
As I ate my first natives alone!

But when I beheld Virtue's friends in their cloaks,
And with sorrowful crape on their hats,
Oh, my grief poured a flood! and the out-of-door folks
Were all crying—I think it was sprats!

PAIN IN A PLEASURE-BOAT.

A SEA ECLOGUE.

"I apprehend you!"—*School of Reform.*

BOATMAN.

Shove off there!—ship the rudder, Bill—cast off! she's under way!

MRS. F.

She's under what?—I hope she's not! good gracious, what a spray!

BOATMAN.

Run up the jib, and rig the boom! keep clear of those two brigs!

MRS. F.

I hope they don't intend some joke by running of their rigs!

BOATMAN.

Bill, shift them bags of ballast aft—she's rather out of trim!

MRS. F.

Great bags of stones! they're pretty things to help a boat to swim!

BOATMAN.

The wind is fresh—if she don't scud, it's not the breeze's fault!

MRS. F.

Wind fresh, indeed, I never felt the air so full of salt!

BOATMAN.

That schooner, Bill, harn't left the roads, with oranges and nuts!

MRS. F.

If seas have roads, they're very rough—I never felt such ruts!

BOATMAN.

It's neap, ye see, she's heavy lade, and couldn't pass the bar.

MRS. F.

The bar! what, roads with turnpikes too? I wonder where they are!

BOATMAN.

Ho! Brig ahoy! hard up! hard up! that lubber cannot steer!

MRS. F.

Yes, yes—hard up upon a rock! I know some danger's near!
Lord, there's a wave! it's coming in! and roaring like a bull!

BOATMAN.

Nothing, Ma'am, but a little slop! go large, Bill! keep her full!

MRS. F.

What, keep her full! what daring work! when full, she must go down!

BOATMAN.

Why, Bill, it lulls! ease off a bit—it's coming off the town!
Steady your helm! we'll clear the *Pint!* lay right for yonder pink!

MRS. F.

Be steady—well, I hope they can! but they've got a pint of drink!

Digitized by Google

BOATMAN.

Bill, give that sheet another haul—she'll fetch it up this reach!

MRS. F.

I'm getting rather pale, I know, and they see it by that speech!
I wonder what it is, now, but—I never felt so queer!

BOATMAN.

Bill, mind your luff—why Bill, I say, she's yawing—keep her near!

MRS. F.

Keep near! we're going farther off; the land's behind our backs.

BOATMAN.

Be easy, Ma'am, it's all correct, that's only cause we tacks:
We shall have to beat about a bit—Bill, keep her out to sea.

MRS. F.

Beat who about? keep who at sea?—how black they look at me!

BOATMAN.

It's veering round—I knew it would! off with her head! stand by!

MRS. F.

Off with her head! whose? where? what with?—an axe I seem to spy!

BOATMAN.

She can't not keep her own, you see; we shall have to pull her in!

MRS. F.

They'll drown me, and take all I have! my life's not worth a pin!

BOATMAN.

Look out you know, be ready, Bill—just when she takes the sand!

MRS. F.

The sand—O Lord! to stop my mouth! how every thing is planned!

BOATMAN.

The handspike, Bill—quick, bear a hand! now Ma'am, just step ashore!

MRS. F.

What! ain't I going to be killed—and weltered in my gore?
Well, Heaven be praised! but I'll not go a-sailing any more!

NOVEMBER.

No sun—no moon!
No morn—no noon—
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—
No sky—no earthly view—
No distance looking blue—
No road—no street—no "t'other side the way"—
No end to any Row—
No indications where the Crescents go—
No top to any Steeple—
No recognitions of familiar people—
No Courtesies for showing 'em—
No knowing 'em—
No travelling at all—no locomotion,
No inkling of the way—no notion—
"No go"—by land or ocean—
No mail—no post—
No news from any foreign coast—
No park—no ring—no afternoon gentility—
No company—no nobility—
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member—
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—
November!

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN.

Young Ben he was a nice young man,
A carpenter by trade;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetched a walk one day,
They met a press-gang crew;
And Sally she did faint away,
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,
Enough to shock a saint,
That though she did seem in a fit,
'Twas nothing but a feint.

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head,
He'll be as good as me;
For when your swain is in our boat,
A boatswain he will be."

So when they'd made their game of her,
And taken off her elf,
She roused, and found she only was
A coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"
She cried and wept outright:
"Then I will to the water-side,
And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,
"Now, young woman," said he,
"If you weep on so, you will make
Eye-water in the sea.

"Alas! they've taken my beau Ben,
To sail with old Benbow;"

Digitized by Google

And her woe began to run afresh,
As if she'd said, Gee woe!

Says he, "They've only taken him
To the Tender-ship, you see:"
"The Tender-ship," cried Sally Brown,
"What a hard-ship that must be!

"Oh! would I were a mermaid now,
For then I'd follow him:
But oh!—I'm not a fish-woman,
And so I cannot swim.

"Alas! I was not born beneath
The Virgin and the Scales,
So I must curse my cruel stars,
And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sailed to many a place
That's underneath the world;
But in two years the ship came home,
And all her sails were furled.

But when he called on Sally Brown,
To see how she got on,
He found she'd got another Ben,
Whose Christian name was John

"O, Sally Brown, O, Sally Brown,
How could you serve me so,
I've met with many a breeze before,
But never such a blow!"

Then reading on his 'bacco-box,
He heaved a heavy sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing, "All's Well,"
But could not, though he tried;
His head was turned, and so he chewed
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befell;
They went and told the Sexton, and
The Sexton tolled the bell.

FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY.

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms!

Now, as they bore him off the field,
Said he, "Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot!"

The army-surgeons made him limbs:
Said he, "They're only pegs;
But there's as wooden members quite,
As represent my legs!"

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray;
So he went to pay her his devours,
When he devoured his pay!

But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off!

"O, Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
Is this your love so warm?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform!"

Said she, "I loved a soldier once,
For he was blithe and brave;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow,
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now!"

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call, I left my legs,
In Badajos's *breaches!*"

"Why then," said she, "you've lost the feet
Of legs in war's alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms!"

"O, false and fickle Nelly Gray!
I know why you refuse:—
Though I've no feet—some other man
Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face;
But, now, a long farewell!
For you will be my death;—alas!
You will not be my *Nell!*"

Now, when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got—
And life was such a burthen grown,
It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck
A rope he did entwine,
And for his second time in life,
Enlisted in the Line!

One end he tied around a beam,
And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off—of course,
He soon was off his legs!

And there he hung till he was dead
As any nail in town—
For, though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down!

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
To find out why he died—
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside!

Digitized by Google

THE BACHELOR'S DREAM.

My pipe is lit, my grog is mixed,
My curtains drawn and all is snug;
Old Puss is in her elbow-chair,
And Tray is sitting on the rug.
Last night I had a curious dream,
Miss Susan Bates was Mistress Mogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

She looked so fair, she sang so well,
I could but woo and she was won,
Myself in blue, the bride in white,
The ring was placed, the deed was done.
Away we went in chaise-and-four,
As fast as grinning boys could flog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

What loving tête-à-têtes to come!
But tête-à-têtes must still defer!
When Susan came to live with me,
Her mother came to live with her!
With sister Belle she couldn't part,
But all *my* ties had leave to jog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

The mother brought a pretty Poll—
A monkey too, what work he made!
The sister introduced a Beau—
My Susan brought a favorite maid,
She had a tabby of her own,—
A snappish mongrel christened Gog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

The Monkey bit—the Parrot screamed,
All day the sister strummed and sung;
The petted maid was such a scold!
My Susan learned to use her tongue:
Her mother had such wretched health,
She sate and croaked like any frog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

No longer Deary, Duck, and Love,
I soon came down to simple "M!"
The very servants crossed my wish,
My Susan let me down to them.
The poker hardly seemed my own,
I might as well have been a log—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

My clothes they were the queerest shape!
Such coats and hats she never met!
My ways they were the oddest ways!
My friends were such a vulgar set!
Poor Tomkinson was snubbed and huffed,
She could not bear that Mister Blogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

At times we had a spar, and then
Mamma must mingle in the song—
The sister took a sister's part—
The Maid declared her Master wrong—
The Parrot learned to call me "Fool!"
My life was like a London fog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

My Susan's taste was superfine,
As proved by bills that had no end—
I never had a decent coat—
I never had a coin to spend!
She forced me to resign my Club,
Lay down my pipe, retrench my grog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

Each Sunday night we gave a rout
To fops and flirts, a pretty list,
And when I tried to steal away.
I found my study full of whist!
Then, first to come and last to go,
There always was a Captain Hogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

Now was not that an awful dream
For one who single is and snug—
With Pussy in the elbow-chair
And Tray resposing on the rug?—
If I must totter down the hill,
'Tis safest done without a clog—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog?

A PLAIN DIRECTION.

"Do you ever deviate?"—*John Bull.*

In London once I lost my way
In faring to and fro,
And asked a little ragged boy
The way that I should go:
He gave a nod, and then a wink,
And told me to get there
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I boxed his little saucy ears,
And then away I strode;
But since I've found that weary path
Is quite a common road.
Utopia is a pleasant place,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a famous town
That drove a famous trade,
Where Whittington walked up and found
A fortune ready made.
The very streets are paved with gold;
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a Fairy Land,
In some romantic tale,
Where Dwarfs if good are sure to thrive
And wicked Giants fail.

Digitized by Google

My wish is great, my shoes are strong,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard about some happy Isle,
Where every man is free,
And none can lie in bonds for life
For want of L. S. D.
Oh! that's the land of Liberty!
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've dreamt about some blessed spot,
Beneath the blessed sky,
Where Bread and Justice never rise
Too dear for folks to buy.
It's cheaper than the Ward of Cheap,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is an ancient House,
As pure as it is old,
Where Members always speak their minds,
And votes are never sold.
I'm fond of all antiquities,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Royal Court
Maintained in noble state,
Where every able man and good
Is certain to be great!
I'm very fond of seeing sights,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Temple too,
Where Christians come to pray;
But canting knaves and hypocrites,
And bigots keep away.
Oh! that's the parish church for me!
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

They say there is a Garden fair,
That's haunted by the dove,
Where love of gold doth ne'er eclipse
The golden light of Love—
The place must be a Paradise,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard there is a famous Land
For public spirit known—
Whose Patriots love its interests
Much better than their own.
The land of Promise sure it is!
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've read about a fine Estate,
A Mansion large and strong;
A view all over Kent and back,
And going for a song.
George Robbins knows the very spot,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square.

I've heard there is a Company
All formal and enrolled,
Will take your smallest silver coin
And give it back in gold.
Of course the office-door is mobbed,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

I've heard about a pleasant Land,
Where omelettes grow on trees,
And roasted pigs run crying out,
"Come eat me, if you please."
My appetite is rather keen,
But how shall I get there?
"Straight down the Crooked Lane,
And all round the Square."

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

"Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

"O, Men, with Sisters dear!
O, Men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

"But why do I talk of Death?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—

Digitized by Google

It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
O God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work—work—work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

"Work—work—work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

"Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright,
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

"Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

"Oh! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eydlids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still in a voice of dolorous pitch,
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!
She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

The following verse appears in the original MS. of the "Song of the Shirt:"

Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Work, work, work,
Like the engine that works by steam!
A mere machine of iron and wood,
That toils for Mammon's sake,
Without a brain to powder and craze,
Or a heart to feel—and break!

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

"Drowned! drowned!"—*Hamlet.*

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently, and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Digitized by Google

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently—kindly—
Smooth, and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring,
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

PART II.

Weary with troubles
That death must deliver,
Once more life bubbles
Away in the river.

* * * *

The moon in the river shone,
And the stars some six or seven—
Poor child of sin, to throw it therein
Seemed sending it to heaven.

* * * *

Cover her, cover her,
Throw the earth over her—
Victim of murder inhumanly done,
With gravel and sod,
Hide, hide her from God,
And the light of the sun!

THE EXILE.

The swallow with summer
Will wing o'er the seas,
The wind that I sigh to
Will visit thy trees,
The ship that it hastens
Thy ports will contain,
But me—I must never
See England again!

There's many that weep there,
But one weeps alone,
For the tears that are failing
So far from her own:
So far from thy own, love,
We know not our pain;
If death is between us,
Or only the main.

When the white cloud reclines
On the verge of the sea,
I fancy the white cliffs,
And dream upon thee;
But the cloud spreads its wings
To the blue heaven and flies.
We never shall meet, love,
Except in the skies!

THE WATER-LADY.

Alas, that moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see!—
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she!

I stayed awhile to see her throw
Her tresses back, that all beset
The fair horizon of her brow
With clouds of jet.

I stayed a little while to view
Her cheek, that wore, in place of red,
The bloom of water—tender blue,
Daintily spread.

I stayed to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips, if she would sing;
The waters closed above her face
With many a ring.

And still I stayed a little more—
Alas! she never comes again!
I throw my flowers from the shore,
And watch in vain.

I know my life will fade away—
I know that I must vainly pine;

Digitized by Google

For I am made of mortal clay,
But she's divine!

TO A COLD BEAUTY.

Lady, would'st thou heiress be
To winter's cold and cruel part?
When he sets the rivers free,
Thou dost still lock up thy heart:
Thou that should'st outlast the snow
But in the whiteness of thy brow?

Scorn and cold neglect are made
For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
Breathing it to words unkind:
Breath which only should belong
To love, to sunlight, and to song!

When the little buds unclose,
Red, and white, and pied, and blue;
And that virgin flower, the rose,
Opes her heart to hold the dew,—
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup?

Let not cold December sit
Thus in love's peculiar throne;
Brooklets are not prison'd now,
But crystal frosts are all agone;
And that which hangs upon the spray,
It is no snow, but flower of May!

RUTH.

She stood breast high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened:—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;—
Thus she stood amid the stooks
Praising God with sweetest looks:—

Sure, I said, heav'n did not mean
Where I reap thou should'st but glean;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.

BALLAD.

She's up and gone, the graceless girl!
And robb'd my failing years;
My blood before was thin and cold,
But now 'tis turn'd to tears:
My shadow falls upon my grave,
So near the brink I stand;
She might have stayed a little yet,
And led me by the hand!

Ay, call her on the barren moor,
And call her on the hill;
'Tis nothing but the heron's cry,
And plovers answer shrill:
My child is flown on wilder wings
Than they have ever spread:
And I may even walk a waste
That widen'd when she fled

Full many a thankless child has been,—
But never one like mine;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
Her drink was rosy wine:
But now she'll share the robin's food,
And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
To meet her father's will!

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn:
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day;
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,
The roses—red and white;
The violets and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light!
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birth-day,—
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,
Where I was used to swing;
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing:
My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,
The fir trees dark and high;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heav'n
Than when I was a boy!

ODE.

Oh! well may poets make a fuss
In summer time, and sigh, "O rus!"
Of London pleasures sick:

Digitized by Google

My heart is all at pant to rest
In greenwood shades,—my eyes detest
This endless meal of brick!

What joy have I in June's return?
My feet are parch'd, my eyeballs burn;
I scent no flowery gust:
But faint the flagging zephyr springs,
With dry Macadam on its wings,
And turns me "dust to dust."

My sun his daily course renews
Due east, but with no eastern dews;
The path is dry and hot!
His setting shows more tamely still,
He sinks behind no purple hill,
But down a chimney's pot!

Oh! but to hear the milk-maid blithe,
Or early mower whet his scythe
The dewy meads among!
My grass is of that sort, alas!
That makes no hay, call'd sparrow-grass
By folks of vulgar tongue!

Oh! but to smell the woodbine sweet!
I think of cowslip-cups,—but meet
With very vile rebuffs!
For meadow buds, I get a whiff
Of Cheshire cheese, or only sniff
The turtle made at Cuff's.

How tenderly Rousseau review'd
His periwinkles! mine are strew'd!
My rose blooms on a gown!
I hunt in vain for eglantine,
And find my blue-bell on the sign
That marks the Bell and Crown!

Where are ye, birds! that blithely wing
From tree to tree, and gaily sing
Or mourn in thickets deep?
My cuckoo has some ware to sell,
The watchman is my Philomel,
My blackbird is a sweep!

Where are ye, linnet! lark! and thrush!
That perch on leafy bough and bush,
And tune the various song?
Two hurdy-gurdists, and a poor
Street-Handel grinding at my door,
Are all my "tuneful throng."

Where are ye, early-purling streams,
Whose waves reflect the morning beams,
And colours of the skies?
My rills are only puddle-drains
From shambles, or reflect the stains
Of calimanco-dyes.

Sweet are the little brooks that run
O'er pebbles glancing in the sun,
Singing in soothing tones:
Not thus the city streamlets flow;
They make no music as they go,
Though never "off the stones."

Where are ye, pastoral, pretty sheep,
That wont to bleat, and frisk, and leap
Beside your woolly dams?
Alas! instead of harmless crooks,
My Corydons use iron hooks,
And skin—not shear—the lambs.

The pipe whereon, in olden day,
Th' Arcadian herdsmen us'd to play
Sweetly, here soundeth not;
But merely breathes unwelcome fumes,
Meanwhile the city boor consumes
The rank weed—"piping hot."

All rural things are vilely mock'd,
On every hand the sense is shock'd
With objects hard to bear:
Shades—vernal shades! where wine is sold!
And for a turfy bank, behold
An Ingram's rustic chair!

Where are ye, London meads and bow'rs,
And gardens redolent of flow'rs
Wherein the zephyr wons?
Alas! Moor Fields are fields no more!
See Hatton's Garden brick'd all o'er;
And that bare wood,—St. John's.

No pastoral scene procures me peace;
I hold no leasowes in my lease,
No cot set round with trees:
No sheep-white hill my dwelling flanks;
And omnium furnishes my banks
With brokers, not with bees.

Oh! well may poets make a fuss
In summer time, and sigh, "O rus!"
Of city pleasures sick:
My heart is all at pant to rest
In greenwood shades,—my eyes detest
This endless meal of brick.

BALLAD.

It was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed!

That churlish season never frowned
On early lovers yet!
Oh no,—the world was newly crowned
With flowers, when first we met.

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed!

What else could peer my glowing cheek
That tears began to stud?
And when I asked the like of love,
You snatched a damask bud;—

And oped it to the dainty core,
Still glowing to the last;
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed.

Digitized by Google

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

Oh when I was a tiny boy
My days and nights were full of joy,
  My mates were blithe and kind!
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
  To cast a look behind!

A hoop was an eternal round
Of pleasure. In those days I found
  A top a joyous thing;—
But now those past delights I drop,
My head, alas! is all my top,
  And careful thoughts the string!

My marbles—once my bag was stored—
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
  With Theseus for a taw!
My playful horse has slipp'd his string,
Forgotten all his capering,
  And harness'd to the law!

My kite—how fast and far it flew!
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew
  My pleasure from the sky!
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
  Will never soar so high.

My joys are wingless all and dead;
My dumps are made of more than lead;
  My flights soon find a fall:
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,
Joy never cometh with a whoop,
  And seldom with a call!

My football's laid upon the shelf;—
I am a shuttlecock myself,
  The world knocks to and fro—
My archery is all unlearn'd,
And grief against myself has turn'd
  My arrows and my bow!

No more in noontide sun I bask;
My authorship's an endless task,
  My head's ne'er out of school.—
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight
I have too many foes to fight,
  And friends grown strangely cool!

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake
  It makes me shrink and sigh—
On this I will not dwell and hang,
The changeling would not feel a pang
  Though these should meet his eye!

No skies so blue, or so serene
As then;—no leaves look half so green
  As clothed the playground tree!
All things I loved are alter'd so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
  That change resides in me!

Oh, for the garb that mark'd the boy—
The trowsers made of corduroy,
  Well ink'd with black and red;—
The crownless hat—ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
  Repose upon my head!

Oh, for the riband round the neck!
The careless dog's ears apt to deck
  My book and collar both!
How can this formal man be styled
Merely an Alexandrine child,
  A boy of larger growth?

Oh, for that small, small beer anew!
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky blue
  That wash'd my sweet meals down;
The master even!—and that small Turk
That fagg'd me!—worse is now my work:
  A fag for all the town!

Oh, for the lessons learn'd by heart!
Ay, though the very birch's smart
  Should mark those hours again;
I'd "kiss the rod," and be resign'd
Beneath the stroke—and even find
  Some sugar in the cane!

Th' Arabian Nights rehearsed in bed!
The Fairy Tales in schooltime read,
  By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!—
The angel form that always walk'd
In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd
  Exactly like Miss Brown!

The "omne bene"—Christmas come!
The prize of merit won for home—
  Merit had prizes then!
But now I write for days and days—
For fame—a deal of empty praise,
  Without the silver pen!

Then home, sweet home!—the crowded coach—
The joyous shout—the loud approach—
  The winding horns like rams'!
The meeting sweet that made me thrill—
The sweetmeats almost sweeter still,
  No "satis" to the "jams!"

When that I was a tiny boy,
My days and nights were full of joy,
  My mates were blithe and kind—
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
  To cast a look behind!

EUGENE ARAM'S DREAM.

'Twas in the prime of summer time,
  An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
  Came bounding out of school;
There were some that ran and some that leaped,
  Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,
  And souls untouched by sin;

Digitized by Google

To a level mead they came, and there
They drave the wickets in;
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran—
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can:
But the usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;
For a burning thought was in his brow,
And his bosom ill at ease:
So he leaned his head on his hands, and read
The book between his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
Nor ever glanced aside,
For the peace of his soul he read that book
In the golden eventide:
Much study had made him very lean,
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
With a fast and fervent grasp
He strained the dusky covers close,
And fixed the brazen hasp:
"O God! could I so close my mind,
And clasp it with a clasp!"

Then leaping on his feet upright,
Some moody turns he took—
Now up the mead, then down the mead,
And past a shady nook—
And, lo! he saw a little boy
That pored upon a book!

"My gentle lad, what is't you read—
Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable?"
The young boy gave an upward glance—
"It is 'The Death of Abel.'"

The usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talked with him of Cain;

And long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod—
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial-clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain,
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain;
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain!

"And well," quoth he, "I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe—
Who spill life's sacred stream!
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
A murder, in a dream!

"One that had never done me wrong,
A feeble man and old;
I led him to a lonely field—
The moon shone clear and cold;
'Now here,' said I, 'this man shall die,
And I will have his gold!'

"Two sudden blows with a rugged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,
And then the deed was done:
There was nothing lying at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone!

"Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill;
And yet I feared him all the more,
For lying there so still;
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill!

"And, lo! the universal air
Seem'd lit with ghastly flame;
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame;
I took the dead man by his hand,
And called upon his name!

"O God! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain!
But when I touched the lifeless clay,
The blood gushed out amain!
For every clot, a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain!

"My head was like an ardent coal,
My heart as solid ice;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the Devil's price;
A dozen times I groaned; the dead
Had never groaned but twice!

"And now, from forth the frowning sky,
From the heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice—the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging sprite:
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead
And hide it from my sight!'

"I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream,
A sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme;
My gentle boy, remember this
Is nothing but a dream!

"Down went the corse with hollow plunge,
And vanished in the pool;

Digitized by Google

Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,
And washed my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young
That evening in the school.

"O Heaven, to think of their white souls,
And mine so black and grim!
I could not share in childish prayer,
Nor join in evening hymn;
Like a devil of the pit I seemed,
'Mid holy cherubim!

"And peace went with them one and all,
And each calm pillow spread;
But guilt was my grim chamberlain
That lighted me to bed;
And drew my midnight curtains round,
With fingers bloody red!

"All night I lay in agony,
In anguish dark and deep,
My fevered eyes I dared not close,
But stared aghast at sleep;
For sin had rendered unto her
The keys of hell to keep!

"All night I lay in agony,
From weary chime to chime,
With one besetting horrid hint,
That racked me all the time;
A mighty yearning like the first
Fierce impulse unto crime!

"One stern tyrannic thought, that made
All other thoughts its slave;
Stronger and stronger every pulse
Did that temptation crave,
Still urging me to go and see
The dead man in his grave!

"Heavily I rose up, as soon
As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accursed pool
With a wild, misgiving eye;
And I saw the dead in the river-bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.

"Merrily rose the lark, and shook
The dew-drop from its wing;
But I never marked its morning flight,
I never heard it sing;
For I was stooping once again
Under the horrid thing.

"With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
I took him up and ran;
There was no time to dig a grave
Before the day began;
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
I hid the murdered man!

"And all that day I read in school,
But my thought was other where;
As soon as the mid-day task was done,
In secret I was there!
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
And still the corse was bare!

"Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
That earth refused to keep:
Or land or sea, though he should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"So wills the fierce avenging sprite,
Till blood for blood atones!
Ay, though he's buried in a cave,
And trodden down with stones,
And years have rotted off his flesh,
The world shall see his bones!

"O God! that horrid, horrid dream
Besets me now awake!
Again—again with dizzy brain,
The human life I take;
And my red right hand grows raging hot,
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

"And still no peace for the restless clay
Will wave or mould allow;
The horrid thing pursues my soul,
It stands before me now!"
The fearful boy looked up, and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep
The urchin eyelids kissed,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
Through the cold and heavy mist;
And Eugene Aram walked between,
With gyves upon his wrist.

THE DEATH-BED.

We watched her breathing through the night,
Her breathing soft and low,
As in her breast the wave of life
Kept heaving to and fro.

So silently we seemed to speak,
So slowly moved about,
As we had lent her half our powers
To eke her living out.

Our very hopes belied our fears,
Our fears our hopes belied,
We thought her dying when she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

For when the morn came dim and sad,
And chill with early showers,
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
Another morn than ours.

Digitized by Google

ROBERT POLLOK.

Robert Pollok was born in the parish of Eaglesham, Renfrewshire, in 1799. His father was a farmer. He was educated at Glasgow University, studied five years in the Divinity Hall of the secession church, and in 1827 was licensed to preach. Meanwhile he had been writing "The Course of Time," and had confined himself so closely to the task as to ruin his health, writing sometimes a thousand lines a week. The poem was published in Edinburgh in 1827, and in August of that year he set out for Italy, but died on the way, near Southampton, September 17th. Pollok published also, anonymously, two prose stories. His memoir, by his brother, was published in 1843. "The Course of Time" has enjoyed a wide popularity, which is now rapidly decreasing everywhere, except perhaps in Scotland.

THE COURSE OF TIME.

BOOK I.

Eternal Spirit! God of truth! to whom
All things seem as they are: Thou who of old
The prophet's eye unscaled, that nightly saw,
While heavy sleep fell down on other men,
In holy vision tranced, the future pass
Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake
And Zion's cedars bow—inspire my song;
My eye unscale; me what is substance teach,
And shadow what, while I of things to come,
As past, rehearsing, sing the Course of Time,
The second birth, and final doom of man.

The muse, that soft and sickly wooes the ear
Of love, or chanting loud in windy rhyme
Of fabled hero, raves through gaudy tale
Not overfraught with sense, I ask not; such
A strain befits not argument so high.
Me thought, and phrase, severely sifting out
The whole idea, grant—uttering as 'tis
The essential truth—Time gone, the righteous saved,
The wicked damned, and Providence approved.

Hold my right hand, Almighty! and me teach
To strike the lyre, but seldom struck, to notes
Harmonious with the morning stars, and pure
As those by sainted bards and angels sung,
Which wake the echoes of eternity—
That fools may hear and tremble, and the wise
Instructed listen, of ages yet to come.

Long was the day, so long expected, past
Of the eternal doom, that gave to each
Of all the human race his due reward.
The sun—earth's sun, and moon, and stars, had ceased
To number seasons, days, and months, and years
To mortal man: hope was forgotten, and fear;
And Time, with all its chance and change, and smiles,
And frequent tears, and deeds of villany,
Or righteousness—once talked of much, as things
Of great renown, was now but ill remembered;
In dim and shadowy vision of the past,
Seen far remote, as country, which has left
The traveller's speedy step, retiring back
From morn till even; and long Eternity
Had rolled his mighty years, and with his years
Men had grown old; the saints all home returned
From pilgrimage, and war, and weeping, long
Had rested in the bowers of peace, that skirt
The stream of life; and long—alas, how long!—
To them it seemed; the wicked who refused
To be redeemed, had wandered in the dark
Of hell's despair, and drunk the burning cup
Their sins had filled with everlasting woe.

Thus far the years had rolled, which none but God
Doth number, when two sons, two youthful sons
Of Paradise, in conversation sweet,
(For thus the heavenly muse instructs me, wooed
At midnight hour with offering sincere
Of all the heart, poured out in holy prayer,)
High on the hills of immortality,
Whence goodliest prospect looks beyond the walls
Of heaven, walked, casting oft their eye far thro'
The pure serene, observant, if returned
From errand duly finished, any came,
Or any, first in virtue now complete,
From other worlds arrived, confirmed in good.

Thus viewing, one they saw, on hasty wing
Directing toward heaven his course; and now,
His flight ascending near the battlements
And lofty hills on which they walked, approached.
For round and round, in spacious circuit wide,
Mountains of tallest stature circumscribe
The plains of Paradise, whose tops, arrayed
In uncreated radiance, seem so pure,
That naught but angel's foot, or saint's, elect
Of God, may venture there to walk; here oft
The sons of bliss take morn or evening pastime,
Delighted to behold ten thousand worlds
Around their suns revolving in the vast
External space, or listen the harmonies
That each to other in its motion sings.
And hence, in middle heaven remote, is seen
The mount of God in awful glory bright.
Within, no orb create of moon, or star,
Or sun gives light; for God's own countenance,
Beaming eternally, gives light to all;
But farther than these sacred hills his will
Forbids its flow—too bright for eyes beyond.

Digitized by Google

This is the last ascent of Virtue; here
All trial ends, and hope; here perfect joy,
With perfect righteousness, which to these heights
Alone can rise, begins, above all fall.—

And now, on wing of holy ardour strong,
Hither ascends the stranger, borne upright;
For stranger he did seem, with curious eye
Of nice inspection round surveying all,
And at the feet alights of those that stood
His coming, who the hand of welcome gave,
And the embrace sincere of holy love;
And thus, with comely greeting kind, began.

Hail, brother! hail, thou son of happiness!
Thou son beloved of God! welcome to heaven!
To bliss that never fades! thy day is past
Of trial, and of fear to fall. Well done,
Thou good and faithful servant; enter now
Into the joy eternal of thy Lord.
Come with us, and behold far higher sight
Than e'er thy heart desired, or hope conceived.
See, yonder is the glorious hill of God,
'Bove angel's gaze in brightness rising high.
Come, join our wing, and we will guide thy flight
To mysteries of everlasting bliss;—
The tree, and fount of life, the eternal throne,
And presence chamber of the King of kings.
But what concern hangs on thy countenance,
Unwont within this place? perhaps thou deem'st
Thyself unworthy to be brought before
The always Ancient One? so are we too
Unworthy; but our God is all in all,
And gives us boldness to approach his throne.

Sons of the Highest! citizens of heaven!
Began the new arrived, right have ye judged:
Unworthy, most unworthy is your servant,
To stand in presence of the King, or hold
Most distant and most humble place in this
Abode of excellent glory unrevealed.
But, God Almighty be for ever praised,
Who, of his fulness, fills me with all grace
And ornament, to make me in his sight
Well pleasing, and accepted in his court.
But, if your leisure waits, short narrative
Will tell, why strange concern thus overhangs
My face, ill seeming here; and haply, too,
Your elder knowledge can instruct my youth,
Of what seems dark and doubtful unexplained.

Our leisure waits thee: speak; and what we can—
Delighted most to give delight—we will;
Though much of mystery yet to us remains.

Virtue—I need not tell, when proved, and full
Matured—inclines us up to God, and heaven,
By law of sweet compulsion strong and sure;
As gravitation to the larger orb
The less attracts, through matter's whole domain.
Virtue in me was ripe—I speak not this
In boast, for what I am to God I owe,
Entirely owe, and of myself am nought.
Equipped, and bent for heaven, I left yon world,
My native seat, which scarce your eye can reach,
Rolling around her central sun, far out,
On utmost verge of light. But first to see
What lay beyond the visible creation
Strong curiosity my flight impelled.
Long was my way, and strange. I passed the bounds
Which God doth set to light, and life, and love;
Where darkness meets with day, where order meets
Disorder, dreadful, waste, and wild; and down
The dark, eternal, uncreated night
Ventured alone. Long, long, on rapid wing,
I sailed through empty, nameless regions vast,
Where utter Nothing dwells, unformed and void
There neither eye, nor ear, nor any sense
Of being most acute, finds object; there
For aught external still you search in vain.
Try touch, or sight, or smell; try what you will,
You strangely find nought but yourself alone.
But why should I in words attempt to tell
What that is like which is—and yet—is not?
This past, my path, descending, still me led
O'er unclaimed continents of desert gloom
Immense, where gravitation, shifting, turns
The other way; and to some dread, unknown,
Infernal centre downward weighs: and now,
Far travelled from the edge of darkness, far
As from that glorious mount of God to light's
Remotest limb—dire sights I saw, dire sounds
I heard; and suddenly before my eye
A wall of fiery adamant sprung up—
Wall mountainous, tremendous, flaming high
Above all flight of hope. I paused, and looked;
And saw, where'er I looked upon that mound,
Sad figures traced in fire—not motionless,
But imitating life. One I remarked
Attentively; but how shall I describe
What nought resembles else my eye hath seen?
Of worm or serpent kind it something looked,
But monstrous, with a thousand snaky heads,
Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath;
And with as many tails, that twisted out
In horrid revolution, tipped with stings;
And all its mouths, that wide and darkly gaped,
And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a sting
Forked, and long, and venomous, and sharp;
And, in its writhings infinite, it grasped
Malignantly what seemed a heart, swollen, black,
And quivering with torture most intense;
And still the heart, with anguish throbbing high,
Made effort to escape, but could not; for
Howe'er it turned, and oft it vainly turned,
These complicated foldings held it fast.
And still the monstrous beast with sting of head
Or tail transpierced it, bleeding evermore.
What this could image, much I searched to know:
And while I stood, and gazed, and wondered long
A voice, from whence I knew not, for no one
I saw, distinctly whispered in my ear
These words—This is the Worm that never dies

Fast by the side of this unsightly thing
Another was portrayed, more hideous still:
Who sees it once shall wish to see 't no more.
For ever undescribed let it remain!
Only this much I may or can unfold—
Far out it thrust a dart that might have made
The knees of terror quake, and on it hung,
Within the triple barbs, a being pierced
Through soul and body both: of heavenly make
Original the being seemed, but fallen,

Digitized by Google

And worn and wasted with enormous woe.
And still around the everlasting lance
It writhed convulsed, and uttered mimic groans;
And tried and wished, and ever tried and wished
To die; but could not die.—Oh, horrid sight!
I trembling gazed, and listened, and heard this voice
Approach my ear—This is Eternal Death.

Nor these alone.—Upon that burning wall,
In horrible emblazonry, were limned
All shapes, all forms, all modes of wretchedness,
And agony, and grief, and desperate woe.
And prominent in characters of fire,
Where'er the eye could light, these words you read:
"Who comes this way—behold, and fear to sin!"
Amazed I stood; and thought such imagery
Foretokened, within, a dangerous abode.
But yet to see the worst a wish arose:
For virtue, by the holy seal of God
Accredited and stamped, immortal all,
And all invulnerable, fears no hurt.
As easy as my wish, as rapidly
I through the horrid rampart passed, unscathed
And unopposed; and, poised on steady wing,
I hovering gazed. Eternal Justice! Sons
Of God! tell me, if ye can tell, what then
I saw, what then I heard.—Wide was the place,
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath, I saw a lake of burning fire,
With tempest tost perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness, 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort; and over head,
And all around, wind warred with wind, storm howled
To storm, and lightning, forked lightning, crossed,
And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath; and far as sight could pierce,
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed;
For ever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.
Some wandered lonely in the desert flames,
And some in fell encounter fiercely met,
With curses loud, and blasphemies, that made
The cheek of darkness pale; and as they fought,
And cursed, and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die,
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of woe.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.
And Sorrow, and Repentance, and Despair,
Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall.
And as I listened, I heard these beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The Earth, the Resurrection morn, and seek
And ever vainly seek, for utter death.
And to their everlasting anguish still.
The thunders from above responding spoke
These words, which, through the caverns of perdition
Forlornly echoing, fell on every ear:
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And back again recoiled a deeper groan.
A deeper groan! Oh, what a groan was that!
I waited not, but swift on speediest wing,
With unaccustomed thoughts conversing, back
Retraced my venturous path from dark to light:
Then up ascending, long ascending up,
I hasted on; though whiles the chiming spheres,
By God's own finger touched to harmony,
Held me delaying—till I here arrived,
Drawn upward by the eternal love of God,
Of wonder full and strange astonishment,
At what in yonder den of darkness dwells,
Which now your higher knowledge will unfold.

They answering said: to ask and to bestow
Knowledge, is much of heaven's delight; and now
Most joyfully what thou requir'st we would;
For much of new, and unaccountable,
Thou bring'st: something indeed we heard before,
In passing conversation slightly touched,
Of such a place; yet, rather to be taught,
Than teaching, answer what thy marvel asks,
We need; for we ourselves, though here, are but
Of yesterday—creation's younger sons.
But there is one, an ancient bard of Earth,
Who, by the stream of life, sitting in bliss,
Has oft beheld the eternal years complete
The mighty circle round the throne of God;
Great in all learning, in all wisdom great,
And great in song; whose harp in lofty strain
Tells frequently of what thy wonder craves,
While round him, gathering, stand the youth of Heaven,
With truth and melody delighted both;
To him this path directs, an easy path,
And easy flight will bring us to his seat.

So saying, they linked hand in hand, spread out
Their golden wings, by living breezes fanned,
And over heaven's broad champaign sailed serene.
O'er hill and valley, clothed with verdure green
That never fades; and tree, and herb, and flower,
That never fades; and many a river, rich
With nectar, winding pleasantly, they passed;
And mansion of celestial mould, and work
Divine. And oft delicious music, sung
By saint and angel bands that walked the vales,
Or mountain tops, and harped upon their harps,
Their ear inclined, and held by sweet constraint
Their wing; not long, for strong desire awaked
Of knowledge that to holy use might turn,
Still pressed them on to leave what rather seemed
Pleasure, due only when all duty's done.

And now beneath them lay the wished for spot,
The sacred bower of that renowned bard;
That ancient bard, ancient in days and song;
But in immortal vigour young, and young
In rosy health—to pensive solitude
Retiring oft, as was his wont on earth.

Fit was the place, most fit, for holy musing.
Upon a little mount, that gently rose,
He sat, clothed in white robes; and o'er his head
A laurel tree, of lustiest, eldest growth
Stately and tall, and shadowing far and wide—
Not fruitless, as on earth, but bloomed, and rich

Digitized by Google

With frequent clusters, ripe to heavenly taste—
Spread its eternal boughs, and in its arms
A myrtle of unfading leaf embraced;
The rose and lily, fresh with fragrant dew,
And every flower of fairest cheek, around
Him, smiling, flocked; beneath his feet, fast by,
And round his sacred hill, a streamlet walked,
Warbling the holy melodies of heaven;
The hallowed zephyrs brought him incense sweet;
And out before him opened, in prospect long,
The river of life, in many a winding maze
Descending from the lofty throne of God,
That with excessive glory closed the scene.

Of Adam's race he was, and lonely sat,
By chance that day, in meditation deep,
Reflecting much of Time, and Earth, and Man:
And now to pensive, now to cheerful notes,
He touched a harp of wondrous melody;
A golden harp it was, a precious gift,
Which, at the day of judgment, with the crown
Of life, he had received from God's own hand,
Reward due to his service done on earth.

He sees their coming; and with greeting kind,
And welcome, not of hollow forged smiles,
And ceremonious compliment of phrase,
But of the heart sincere, into his bower
Invites. Like greeting they returned; not bent
In low obeisancy, from creature most
Unfit to creature; but with manly form
Upright, they entered in; though high his rank,
His wisdom high, and mighty his renown.
And thus, deferring all apology,
The two their new companion introduced.

Ancient in knowledge!—bard of Adam's race!
We bring thee one, of us inquiring what
We need to learn, and with him wish to learn.
His asking will direct thy answer best.

Most ancient bard! began the new arrived,
Few words will set my wonder forth, and guide
Thy wisdom's light to what in me is dark.

Equipped for heaven, I left my native place;
But first beyond the realms of light I bent
My course; and there, in utter darkness, far
Remote, I beings saw forlorn in woe,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight;
And still I heard these wretched beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The Earth, the Resurrection morn, and seek,
And ever vainly seek, for utter death:
And from above, the thunders answered still,
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And every where throughout that horrid den,
I saw a form of excellence, a form
Of beauty without spot, that nought could see
And not admire—admire, and not adore.
And from its own essential beams it gave
Light to itself, that made the gloom more dark;
And every eye in that infernal pit
Beheld it still; and from its face—how fair!
O how exceeding fair!—for ever sought,
But ever vainly sought, to turn away.
That image, as I guess, was Virtue; for
Nought else hath God given countenance so fair.
But why in such a place it should abide?
What place it is? what beings there lament?
Whence came they? and for what their endless groan?
Why curse they God? why seek they utter death?
And chief, what means the Resurrection morn?
My youth expects thy reverend age to tell.

Thou rightly deem'st, fair youth, began the bard;
The form thou saw'st was Virtue, ever fair.
Virtue, like God, whose excellent majesty,
Whose glory virtue is, is omnipresent.
No being, once created rational,
Accountable, endowed with moral sense,
With sapience of right and wrong endowed,
And charged, however fallen, debased, destroyed·
However lost, forlorn, and miserable;
In guilt's dark shrouding wrapt, however thick
However drunk, delirious, and mad,
With sin's full cup; and with whatever damned,
Unnatural diligence it work and toil,
Can banish virtue from its sight, or once
Forget that she is fair. Hides it in night,
In central night; takes it the lightning's wing,
And flies for ever on, beyond the bounds
Of all; drinks it the maddest cup of sin;
Dives it beneath the ocean of despair;
It dives, it drinks, it flies, it hides in vain:
For still the eternal beauty, image fair,
Once stampt upon the soul, before the eye
All lovely stands, nor will depart; so God
Ordains: and lovely to the worst she seems,
And ever seems; and as they look, and still
Must ever look upon her loveliness
Remembrance dire of what they were, of what
They might have been, and bitter sense of what
They are, polluted, ruined, hopeless, lost,
With most repenting torment rend their hearts.
So God ordains—their punishment severe,
Eternally inflicted by themselves.
'Tis this—this Virtue hovering evermore
Before the vision of the damned, and in
Upon their monstrous moral nakedness
Casting unwelcome light, that makes their woe,
That makes the essence of the endless flame:
Where this is, there is Hell—darker than aught
That he, the bard three-visioned, darkest saw.

The place thou saw'st was Hell—the groans thou heard'st
The wailings of the damned—of those who would
Not be redeemed—and at the judgment day,
Long past, for unrepented sins were damned.
The seven loud thunders which thou heard'st, declare
The eternal wrath of the Almighty God.
But whence, or why they came to dwell in woe,
Why they curse God, what means the glorious morn
Of Resurrection—these a longer tale
Demand, and lead the mournful lyre far back
Through memory of sin, and mortal man.
Yet haply not rewardless we shall trace
The dark disastrous years of finished Time

Digitized by Google

Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy.
Nor yet shall all be sad; for God gave peace,
Much peace, on earth, to all who feared his name.

But first it needs to say, that other style,
And other language than thy ear is wont,
Thou must expect to hear—the dialect
Of man: for each in heaven a relish holds
Of former speech, that points to whence he came.
But whether I of person speak, or place,
Event or action, moral or divine;
Or things unknown compare to things unknown;
Allude, imply, suggest, apostrophize;
Or touch, when wandering through the past, on moods
Of mind thou never felt'st; the meaning still,
With easy apprehension, thou shalt take;
So perfect here is knowledge, and the strings
Of sympathy so tuned, that every word
That each to other speaks, though never heard
Before, at once is fully understood,
And every feeling uttered, fully felt.

So shalt thou find, as from my various song,
That backward rolls o'er many a tide of years,
Directly or inferred, thy asking, thou,
And wondering doubt, shalt learn to answer, while
I sketch in brief the history of Man.

BOOK II.

ANALYSIS.

A description of the earth when first created; and the formation of man; a reasonable free agent, upright and immortal. The command given was a test of filial love, loyalty, obedience and faith. The temptation, sin and fall of man, and redemption from death by the death of Christ. Many would not accept the free offer of life and salvation, and in consquence, incurred the punishment of the second death and hell.—That they acted thus, and thus perversely chose, well assured of the consequence, by the information contained and given them in the Bible; which was a code of laws, containing the will of heaven, and defined the bounds of vice and virtue, and of life and death. Mankind were required to read, believe, and obey; and although many did so believe, and were saved, yet many turned the truth of God into a lie, transforming the meaning of the text, to suit their own vile and wicked purposes, "deceiving and deceived." That the voice of God, against which nothing could "bribe to sleep" the truths of "Judgment, and a Judge," caused the wicked to be "ill at ease:" on which account many ran into impious idolatry, and worshipped ten thousand deities, "imagined worse than he who craved their peace."

The magistrate often turned religion into a trick of state, despising the truth, and forcing the consciences of men: while the enslaved "mimicking the follies of the great, despised her too." The other influences which led to error, are mentioned; short sighted reason, vanity, indolence, and finally "Pride, self-adoring pride, was primal cause of all sin past, all pain, all woe to come."

This said, he waked the golden harp, and thus,
While on him inspiration breathed, began.

As from yon everlasting hills, that gird
Heaven northward, I thy course espied, I judge
Thou from the arctic regions came? Perhaps
Thou noticed on thy way a little orb,
Attended by one moon—her lamp by night;
With her fair sisterhood of planets seven,
Revolving round their central sun—she third
In place, in magnitude the fourth—that orb,
New made, new named, inhabited anew,
(Though whiles we sons of Adam visit still,
Our native place; not changed so far but we
Can trace our ancient walks—the scenery
Of childhood, youth, and prime, and hoary age—
But scenery most of suffering and woe,)
That little orb, in days remote of old,
When angels yet were young, was made for man,
And titled Earth—her primal virgin name:
Created first so lovely, so adorned
With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale:
Woodland and stream, and lake, and rolling seas;
Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,
And herb and flower: so lovely, so adorned
With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl
Of every wing and every tuneful note;
And with all fish that in the multitude
Of waters swam: so lovely, so adorned,
So fit a dwelling place for man, that, as
She rose, complete, at the creating word,
The morning stars—the sons of God, aloud
Shouted for joy; and God beholding, saw
The fair design, that from eternity
His mind conceived, accomplished; and, well pleased,
His six days finish'd work most good pronounced.
And man declared the sovereign prince of all.

All else was prone, irrational, and mute,
And unaccountable, by instinct led:
But man He made of angel form erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above,
And on his soul impressed His image fair,
His own similitude of holiness,
Of virtue, truth, and love; with reason high
To balance right and wrong, and conscience quick
To choose or to reject; with knowledge great,
Prudence and wisdom, vigilance and strength,
To guard all force or guile; and last of all,
The highest gift of God's abundant grace,
With perfect, free, unbiassed will.—Thus man
Was made upright, immortal made, and crowned
The king of all; to eat, to drink, to do
Freely and sovereignly his will entire:
By one command alone restrained, to prove,
As was most just, his filial love sincere,
His loyalty, obedience due, and faith.
And thus the prohibition ran, expressed,
As God is wont, in terms of plainest truth

Digitized by Google

Of every tree that in the garden grows
Thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree
That knowledge hath of good and ill, eat not,
Nor touch; for in the day thou eatest, thou
Shalt die. Go, and this one command obey;
Adam, live and be happy, and, with thy Eve,
Fit consort, multiply and fill the earth.

Thus they, the representatives of man,
Were placed in Eden—choicest spot on earth;
With royal honour, and with glory crowned,
Adam, the lord of all, majestic walked,
With godlike countenance sublime, and form
Of lofty towering strength; and by his side
Eve, fair as morning star, with modesty
Arrayed, with virtue, grace, and perfect love:
In holy marriage wed, and eloquent
Of thought and comely words, to worship God
And sing his praise—the giver of all good.
Glad, in each other glad, and glad in hope;
Rejoicing in their future happy race.

O lovely, happy, blest, immortal pair!
Pleased with the present, full of glorious hope.
But short, alas, the song that sings their bliss:
Henceforth the history of man grows dark:
Shade after shade of deepening gloom descends:
And Innocence laments her robes defiled.
Who farther sings, must change the pleasant lyre
To heavy notes of woe. Why?—dost thou ask,
Surprised? The answer will surprise thee more.
Man sinned: tempted, he ate the guarded tree;
Tempted of whom thou afterwards shalt hear:
Audacious, unbelieving, proud, ungrateful,
He ate the interdicted fruit, and fell;
And in his fall, his universal race;
For they in him by delegation were,
In him to stand or fall—to live or die.

Man most ingrate! so full of grace! to sin—
Here interposed the new arrived—so full
Of bliss—to sin against the Gracious One!
The holy, just, and good! the Eternal Love!
Unseen, unheard, unthought of wickedness!
Why slumbered vengeance? No, it slumbered not.
The ever just and righteous God would let
His fury loose, and satisfy his threat.

That had been just, replied the reverend bard:
But done, fair youth, thou ne'er hadst met me here:
I ne'er had seen yon glorious throne in peace.

Thy powers are great, originally great.
And purified even at the fount of light.
Exert them now; call all their vigour out;
Take room, think vastly; meditate intensely;
Reason profoundly; send conjecture forth;
Let fancy fly; stoop down; ascend; all length,
All breadth explore; all moral, all divine;
Ask prudence, justice, mercy ask, and might;
Weigh good with evil, balance right with wrong;
With virtue vice compare—hatred with love;
God's holiness, God's justice, and God's truth,
Deliberately and cautiously compare
With sinful, wicked, vile, rebellious man,
And see if thou can'st punish sin, and let
Mankind go free. Thou fail'st—be not surprised:
I bade thee search in vain. Eternal love—
Harp, lift thy voice on high—Eternal love,
Eternal, sovereign love, and sovereign grace,
Wisdom, and power, and mercy infinite,
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God,
Devised the wondrous plan—devised, achieved;
And in achieving made the marvel more.
Attend, ye heavens! ye heaven of heavens, attend!
Attend, and wonder! wonder evermore!
When man had fallen, rebelled, insulted God;
Was most polluted, yet most madly proud;
Indebted infinitely, yet most poor
Captive to sin, yet willing to be bound;
To God's incensed justice, and hot wrath
Exposed; due victim of eternal death
And utter woe—Harp, lift thy voice on high!
Ye everlasting hills!—ye angels, bow!
Bow, ye redeemed of men! God was made flesh
And dwelt with man on earth! the Son of God,
Only begotten, and well beloved, between
Men and his Father's justice interposed;
Put human nature on; His wrath sustained;
And in their name suffered, obeyed, and died.
Making his soul an offering for sin;
Just for unjust, and innocence for guilt.
By doing, suffering, dying unconstrained,
Save by omnipotence of boundless grace,
Complete atonement made to God appeased;
Made honourable his insulted law,
Turning the wrath aside from pardoned man.
Thus Truth with Mercy met, and Righteousness
Stooping from highest heaven, embraced fair Peace,
That walked the earth in fellowship with Love.

O love divine! O mercy infinite!
The audience here in glowing rapture broke
O love, all height above, all depth below,
Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
All thought, the Holy One for sinners dies
The Lord of life for guilty rebels bleeds
Quenches eternal fire with blood divine.
Abundant mercy! overflowing grace!
There whence I came, I something heard of men,
Their name had reached us, and report did speak
Of some abominable horrid thing,
Of desperate offence they had committed;
And something too of wondrous grace we heard;
And oft of our celestial visitants
What man, what God had done, inquired: but they
Forbid, our asking never met directly,
Exhorting still to persevere upright,
And we should hear in heaven, tho' greatly blest
Ourselves, new wonders of God's wondrous love.
This hinting, keener appetite to know
Awaked; and as we talked, and much admired
What new we there should learn, we hasted each
To nourish virtue to perfection up,
That we might have our wondering resolved,
And leave of louder praise, to greater deeds
Of loving kindness due. Mysterious love!
God was made flesh, and dwelt with men on earth!
Blood holy, blood divine for sinners shed!
My asking ends—but makes my wonder more.
Saviour of men! henceforth be thou my theme:

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF

Redeeming love, my study day and night.
Mankind were lost, all lost, and all redeemed!

Thou err'st again—but innocently err'st;
Not knowing sin's depravity, nor man's
Sincere and persevering wickedness.
All were redeemed? Not all—or thou hadst heard
No human voice in hell. Many refused,
Although beseeched, refused to be redeemed;
Rodeemed from death to life, from woe to bliss!

Canst thou believe my song when thus I sing?
When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost—
Ye choral harps! ye angels that excel
In strength! and loudest, ye redeemed of men!
To God—to Him that sits upon the throne
On high, and to the Lamb, sing honour, sing
Dominion, glory; blessing sing, and praise—
When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost,
Messiah, Prince of Peace, Eternal King,
Died, that the dead might live, the lost be saved.
Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, earth!
Thou ancient, thou forgotten earth! Ye worlds admire!
Admire, and be confounded! and thou, Hell!
Deepen thy eternal groan—men would not be
Redeemed—I speak of many, not of all—
Would not be saved for lost, have life for death!

Mysterious song! the new arrived exclaimed;
Mysterious mercy! most mysterious hate!
To disobey was mad; this madder far,
Incurable insanity of will.
What now but wrath could guilty men expect?
What more could love, what more could mercy do?

No more, resumed the bard, no more they could.
Thou hast seen hell—the wicked there lament;
And why?—For love and mercy twice despised.
The husbandman, who sluggishly forgot
In spring to plough and sow, could censure none,
Tho' winter clamoured round his empty barns.
But he who having thus neglected, did
Refuse, when autumn came, and famine threatened,
To reap the golden field that charity
Bestowed—nay, more obdurate, proud, and blind,
And stupid still, refused, tho' much beseeched,
And long entreated, even with Mercy's tears,
To eat what to his very lips was held,
Cooked temptingly—he certainly, at least,
Deserved to die of hunger, unbemoaned.
So did the wicked spurn the grace of God;
And so were punished with the second death.
The first, no doubt, punition less severe
Intended, death belike of all entire;
But this incurred, by God discharged, and life
Freely presented, and again despised—
Despised, though bought with Mercy's proper blood—
Twas this dug hell, and kindled all its bounds
With wrath and inextinguishable fire.

Free was the offer, free to all, of life
And of salvation; but the proud of heart,
Because 'twas free, would not accept; and still
To merit wished: and choosing, thus unshipped
Uncompassed, unprovisioned, and bestormed,
To swim a sea of breadth immeasurable,
They scorned the goodly bark, whose wings the breath
Of God's eternal Spirit filled for heaven,
That stopped to take them in! and so were lost.

What wonders dost thou tell? to merit, how?
Of creature meriting in sight of God,
As right of service done, I never heard
Till now. We never fell; in virtue stood
Upright, and persevered in holiness
But stood by grace, by grace we persevered;
Ourselves, our deeds, our holiest, highest deeds
Unworthy aught—grace worthy endless praise.
If we fly swift, obedient to his will,
He gives us wings to fly; if we resist
Temptation, and ne'er fall, it is his shield
Omnipotent that wards it off; if we,
With love unquenchable, before him burn,
'Tis he that lights and keeps alive the flame.
Men surely lost their reason in their fall,
And did not understand the offer made.

They might have understood, the bard replied.
They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? the author, God himself;
The subject, God and man; salvation, life
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds—
Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely; only star which rose on Time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The everlasting hills, pointed the sinner's eye:
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
Evangelists, apostles, men inspired,
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
Apart and consecrated to declare
To earth the counsels of the Eternal One,
This book this holiest, this sublimest book,
Was sent.—Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire
To man, this book contained; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue, and of life and death;
And what was shadow, what was substance taught.
Much it revealed; important all; the least
Worth more than what else seemed of highest worth:
But this of plainest, most essential truth—
That God is one, eternal, holy, just,
Omnipotent, omniscient, infinite;
Most wise, most good, most merciful and true;
In all perfection most unchangeable:
That man—that every man of every clime
And hue, of every age, and every rank,
Was bad—by nature and by practice bad;
In understanding blind, in will perverse,
In heart corrupt; in every thought, and word
Imagination, passion, and desire,
Most utterly depraved throughout, and ill

Digitized by Google

In sight of Heaven, though less in sight of man;
At enmity with God his maker born,
And by his very life an heir of death:
That man—that every man was, farther, most
Unable to redeem himself, or pay
One mite of his vast debt to God—nay, more,
Was most reluctant and averse to be
Redeemd, and sin's most voluntary slave:
That Jesus, Son of God, of Mary born
In Bethlehem, and by Pilate crucified
On Calvary for man thus fallen and lost,
Died; and, by death, life and salvation bought,
And perfect righteousness, for all who should
In his great name believe: that He, the third
In the eternal Essence, to the prayer
Sincere should come, should come as soon as asked,
Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
To give faith and repentance, such as God
Accepts—to open the intellectual eyes,
Blinded by sin; to bend the stubborn will,
Perversely to the side of wrong inclined,
To God and his commandments, just and good;
The wild rebellious passions to subdue,
And bring them back to harmony with heaven;
To purify the conscience, and to lead
The mind into all truth, and to adorn
With every holy ornament of grace,
And sanctify the whole renewed soul,
Which henchforth might no more fall totally,
But persevere, though erring oft, amidst
The mists of time, in piety to God,
And sacred works of charity to men:
That he, who thus believed, and practised thus,
Should have his sins forgiven, however vile;
Should be sustained at mid-day, morn, and even,
By God's omnipotent, eternal grace;
And in the evil hour of sore disease,
Temptation, persecution, war, and death—
For temporal death, although unstinged, remained—
Beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings
Should sit unhurt, and at the judgment day,
Should share the resurrection of the just,
And reign with Christ in bliss for evermore:
That all, however named, however great,
Who would not thus believe, nor practise thus,
But in their sins impenitent remained,
Should in perpetual fear and terror live;
Should die unpardoned, unredeemed, unsaved;
And at the hour of doom, should be cast out
To utter darkness in the night of hell,
By mercy and by God abandoned, there
To reap the harvests of eternal woe.

This did that book declare in obvious phrase,
In most sincere and honest words, by God
Himself selected and arranged; so clear,
So plain, so perfectly distinct, that none
Who read with humble wish to understand,
And asked the Spirit, given to all who asked,
Could miss their meaning, blazed in heavenly light.

The book—this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stampt
From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and, in the night of time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live:
And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
Believed, obeyed; and now, as the Amen,
True, Faithful Witness swore, with snowy robes
And branchy palms surround the fount of life
And drink the streams of immortality,
For ever happy, and for ever young.

Many believed; but more the truth of God
Turned to a lie, deceiving and deceived;—
Each, with the accursed sorcery of sin,
To his own wish and vile propensity
Transforming still the meaning of the text.

Hear, while I briefly tell what mortals proved,
By effort vast of ingenuity,
Most wondrous, though perverse and damnable;
Proved from the Bible, which, as thou hast heard
So plainly spoke that all could understand.
First, and not least in number, argued some,
From out this book itself, it was a lie,
A fable framed by crafty men to cheat
The simple herd, and make them bow the knee
To kings and priests. These in their wisdom left
The light revealed, and turned to fancies wild;
Maintaining loud, that ruined, helpless man,
Needed no saviour. Others proved that men
Might live and die in sin, and yet be saved,
For so it was decreed; binding the will,
By God left free, to unconditional,
Unreasonable fate. Others believed
That he who was most criminal, debased,
Condemned, and dead, unaided might ascend
The heights of Virtue; to a perfect law
Giving a lame, half-way obedience, which
By useless effort only served to show
The impotence of him who vainly strove
With finite arm to measure infinite;
Most useless effort! when to justify
In sight of God it meant, as proof of faith
Most acceptable, and worthy of all praise.
Another held, and from the Bible held,
He was infallible,—most fallen by such
Pretence—that none the Scriptures, open to all,
And most to humble-hearted, ought to read,
But priests; that all who ventured to disclaim
His forged authority, incurred the wrath
Of heaven; and he who, in the blood of such,
Though father, mother, daughter, wife, or son,
Imbrued his hands, did most religious work,
Well pleasing to the heart of the Most High.
Others, in outward rite, devotion placed;
In meats, in drinks; in robe of certain shape—
In bodily abasements, bended knees;
Days, numbers, places, vestments, words, and names—
Absurdly in their hearts imagining,
That God, like men, was pleased with outward show.
Another, stranger and more wicked still,
With dark and dolorous labour, ill applied,
With many a gripe of conscience, and with most

Digitized by Google

Unhealthy and abortive reasoning,
That brought his sanity to serious doubt,
'Mong wise and honest men, mantained that He,
First Wisdom, Great Messiah, Prince of Peace,
The second of the uncreated Three,
Was nought but man—of earthly origin·
Thus making void the sacrifice Divine,
And leaving guilty men, God's holy law
Still unatoned, to work them endless death.

These are a part; but to relate them all
The monstrous, unbaptized phantasies,
Imaginations fearfully absurd,
Hobgoblin rites, and moon-struck reveries,
Distracted creeds, and visionary dreams,
More bodiless and hideously misshapen
Than ever fancy, at the noon of night,
Playing at will, framed in the madman's brain,
That from this book of simple truth were proved,
Were proved, as foolish men were wont to prove,
Would bring my word in doubt, and thy belief
Stagger, though here I sit and sing, within
The pale of truth, where falsehood never came.

The rest, who lost the heavenly light revealed,
Not wishing to retain God in their minds,
In darkness wandered on; yet could they not,
Though moral night around them drew her pall
Of blackness, rest in utter unbelief.
The voice within, the voice of God, that nought
Could bribe to sleep, though steeped in sorceries
Of Hell, and much abused by whisperings
Of evil spirits in the dark, announced
A day of judgment, and a judge—a day
Of misery, or bliss;—and, being ill
At ease, for gods they chose them stocks and stones,
Reptiles, and weeds and beasts and creeping things,
And spirits accursed—ten thousand deities!
(Imagined worse than he who craved their peace,)
And, bowing, worshipped these as best beseemed,
With midnight revelry, obscene and loud,
With dark, infernal, devilish ceremonies,
And horrid sacrifice of human flesh,
That made the fair heavens blush. So bad was sin!
So lost, so ruined, so depraved was man!
Created first in God's own image fair!

Oh, cursed, cursed Sin! traitor to God,
And ruiner of man! mother of Woe,
And Death, and Hell,—wretched, yet seeking worse:
Polluted most, yet wallowing in the mire;
Most mad, yet drinking Frenzy's giddy cup;
Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair;
Destroyed, destroying; in tormenting pained;
Unawed by wrath; by mercy unreclaimed;
Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad—
Thy time on earth is past, thy war with God
And holiness: but who, oh who shall tell,
Thy unrepentable and ruinous thoughts?
Thy sighs, thy groans? Who reckon thy burning tears,
And damned looks of everlasting grief,
Where now, with those who took their part with thee,
Thou sitt'st in Hell, gnawed by the eternal Worm—
To hurt no more on all the holy hills?

That those, deserting once the lamp of truth,
Should wander ever on, from worse to worse
Erroneously, thy wonder needs not ask:
But that enlightened, reasonable men,
Knowing themselves accountable, to whom
God spoke from heaven, and by his servants warned,
Both day and night, with earnest, pleading voice,
Of retribution equal to their works,
Should persevere in evil, and be lost—
This strangeness, this unpardonable guilt,
Demands an answer, which my song unfolds,
In part, directly; but hereafter more,
To satisfy thy wonder, thou shalt learn,
Inferring much from what is yet to sing.

Know then, of men who sat in highest place
Exalted, and for sin by others done
Were chargeable, the king and priest were chief.
Many were faithful, holy, just, upright,
Faithful to God and man—reigning renowned
In righteousness, and, to the people, loud
And fearless, speaking all the words of life.
These at the judgment day, as thou shalt hear
Abundant harvest reaped; but many, too,
Alas, how many! famous now in Hell,
Were wicked, cruel, tyrannous, and vile;
Ambitious of themselves, abandoned, mad;
And still from servants hasting to be gods,
Such gods as now they serve in Erebus.
I pass their lewd example by, that led
So many wrong, for courtly fashion lost,
And prove them guilty of one crime alone.
Of every wicked ruler, prince supreme,
Or magistrate below, the one intent,
Purpose, desire, and struggle day and night,
Was evermore to wrest the crown from off
Messiah's head, and put it on his own;
And in His place give spiritual laws to men;
To bind religion—free by birth, by God,
And nature free, and made accountable
To none but God—behind the wheels of state·
To make the holy altar, where the Prince
Of life, incarnate, bled to ransom man,
A footstool to the throne. For this they met
Assembled, counselled, meditated, planned,
Devised in open and secret; and for this
Enacted creeds of wondrous texture, creeds
The Bible never owned, unsanctioned too,
And reprobate in heaven; but by the power
That made, (exerted now in gentler form,
Monopolizing rights and privileges,
Equal to all, and waving now the sword
Of persecution fierce, tempered in hell,)
Forced on the conscience of inferior men:
The conscience, that sole monarchy in man,
Owing allegiance to no earthly prince;
Made by the edict of creation free;
Made sacred, made above all human laws;
Holding of heaven alone; of most divine
And indefeasible authority;
An individual sovereignty, that none

Digitized by Google

Created might, unpunished, bind or touch;
Unbound, save by the eternal laws of God,
And unamenable to all below.

Thus did the uncircumcised potentates
Of earth debase religion in the sight
Of those they ruled—who, looking up, beheld
The fair celestial gift despised, enslaved;
And, mimicking the folly of the great,
With prompt docility despised her too.

The prince or magistrate, however named
Or praised, who, knowing better, acted thus,
Was wicked, and received, as he deserved,
Damnation. But the unfaithful priest, what tongue
Enough shall execrate? His doctrine may
Be passed, though mixed with most unhallowed leaven,
That proved to those who foolishly partook,
Eternal bitterness:—but this was still
His sin—beneath what cloak soever veiled,
His ever growing and perpetual sin.
First, last, and middle thought, whence every wish,
Whence every action rose, and ended both—
To mount to place, and power of worldly sort;
To ape the gaudy pomp and equipage
Of earthly state, and on his mitred brow
To place a royal crown: for this he sold
The sacred truth to him who most would give
Of titles, benefices, honours, names:
For this betrayed his Master; and for this
Made merchandise of the immortal souls
Committed to his care—this was his sin.

Of all who office held unfairly, none
Could plead excuse; he least, and last of all.
By solemn, awful ceremony, he
Was set apart to speak the truth entire,
By action, and by word; and round him stood
The people, from his lips expecting knowledge:
One day in seven, the Holy Sabbath termed,
They stood; for he had sworn in face of God
And man, to deal sincerely with their souls;
To preach the gospel for the gospel's sake;
Had sworn to hate and put away all pride,
All vanity, all love of earthly pomp;
To seek all mercy, meekness, truth, and grace;
And being so endowed himself, and taught
In them like works of holiness to move;
Dividing faithfully the word of life.
And oft indeed the word of life he taught;
But practising, as thou hast heard, who could
Believe? Thus was religion wounded sore
At her own altars, and among her friends.
The people went away, and, like the priest,
Fulfilling what the prophet spoke before,
For honour strove, and wealth, and place, as if
The preacher had rehearsed an idle tale.
The enemies of God rejoiced, and loud
The unbeliever laughed, boasting a life
Of fairer character than his, who owned,
For king and guide, the undefiled One.

Most guilty, villanous, dishonest man!
Wolf in the clothing of the gentle lamb!
Dark traitor in Messiah's holy camp!
Leper in saintly garb!—assassin masked
In Virtue's robe! vile hypocrite accursed!
I strive in vain to set his evil forth.
The words that should sufficiently accurse,
And execrate such reprobate, had need
Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.
Among the saddest in the den of woe,
Thou saw'st him saddest, 'mong the damned most damned.

But why should I with indignation burn,
Not with beseeming here, and long forgot?
Or why one censure for another's sin?
Each had his conscience, each his reason, will,
And understanding, for himself to search,
To choose, reject, believe, consider, act:
And God proclaimed from heaven, and by an oath
Confirmed, that each should answer for himself
And as his own peculiar work should be,
Done by his proper self, should live, or die.
But sin, deceitful and deceiving still,
Had gained the heart, and reason led astray.

A strange belief, that leaned its idiot back
On folly's topmost twig—belief that God,
Most wise, had made a world, had creatures made,
Beneath his care to govern, and protect,—
Devoured its thousands. Reason, not the true,
Learned, deep, sober, comprehensive, sound;
But bigoted, one-eyed, short-sighted Reason,
Most zealous, and sometimes, no doubt, sincere—
Devoured its thousands. Vanity to be
Renowned for creed eccentrical—devoured
Its thousands: but a lazy, corpulent,
And over-credulous faith, that leaned on all
It met, nor asked if 'twas a reed or oak;
Stepped on, but never earnestly inquired
Whether to heaven or hell the journey led—
Devoured its tens of thousands, and its hands
Made reddest in the precious blood of souls.

In Time's pursuits men ran till out of breath.
The astronomer soared up, and counted stars,
And gazed, and gazed upon the Heaven's bright face,
Till he dropt down dim-eyed into the grave:
The numerist in calculations deep
Grew gray: the merchant at his desk expired:
The statesman hunted for another place,
Till death o'ertook him, and made him his prey:
The miser spent his eldest energy,
In grasping for another mite: the scribe
Rubbed pensively his old and withered brow,
Devising new impediments to hold
In doubt the suit that threatened to end too soon:
The priest collected tithes, and pleaded rights
Of decimation to the very last.
In science, learning, all philosophy,
Men laboured all their days, and laboured hard,
And dying, sighed how little they had done:
But in religion they at once grew wise.
A creed in print, though never understood;
A theologic system on the shelf,
Was spiritual lore enough, and served their turn:
But served it ill. They sinned, and never knew
For what the Bible said of good and bad,
Of holiness and sin, they never asked.

Digitized by Google

Absurd—prodigiously absurd, to think
That man's minute and feeble faculties,
Even in the very childhood of his being,
With mortal shadows dimmed, and wrapt around,
Could comprehend at once the mighty scheme,
Where rolled the ocean of eternal love;
Where wisdom infinite its master stroke
Displayed; and where omnipotence, oppreat,
Did travel in the greatness of its strength;
And everlasting justice lifted up
The sword to smite the guiltless Son of God;
And mercy, smiling, bade the sinner go!
Redemption is the science, and the song
Of all eternity: archangels day
And night into its glories look: the saints,
The elders round the throne, old in the years
Of heaven, examine it perpetually;
And every hour, get clearer, ampler views
Of right and wrong—see virtue's beauty more;
See vice more utterly depraved, and vile;
And this with a more perfect hatred hate;
That daily love with a more perfect love.

But whether I for man's perdition blame
Office administered amiss; pursuit
Of pleasure false; perverted reason blind;
Or indolence that ne'er inquired—I blame
Effect and consequence; the branch, the leaf.
Who finds the fount and bitter root, the first
And guiltiest cause whence sprung this endless woe,
Must deep descend into the human heart,
And find it there. Dread passion! making men
On earth, and even in hell, if Mercy yet
Would stoop so low, unwilling to be saved,
If saved by grace of God.—Hear then, in brief,
What peopled hell, what holds its prisoners there.

Pride, self-adoring pride, was primal cause
Of all sin past, all pain, all woe to come.
Unconquerable pride! first, eldest sin;
Great fountain-head of evil; highest source,
Whence flowed rebellion 'gainst the Omnipotent,
Whence hate of man to man, and all else ill.
Pride at the bottom of the human heart
Lay, and gave root and nourishment to all
That grew above. Great ancestor of vice!
Hate, unbelief, and blasphemy of God;
Envy and slander; malice and revenge;
And murder, and deceit, and every birth
Of damned sort, was progeny of pride.
It was the ever-moving, acting force,
The constant aim, and the most thirsty wish
Of every sinner unrenewed, to be
A god:—in purple or in rags, to have
Himself adored: whatever shape or form
His actions took: whatever phrase he threw
About his thoughts, or mantle o'er his life,
To be the highest, was the inward cause
Of all—the purpose of the heart to be
Set up, admired, obeyed. But who would bow
The knee to one who served and was dependent?
Hence man's perpetual struggle, night and day,
To prove he was his own proprietor,
And independent of his God, that what
He had might be esteemed his own, and praised
As such.—He laboured still, and tried to stand
Alone unpropped—to be obliged to none;
And in the madness of his pride he bade
His God farewell, and turned away to be
A god himself; resolving to rely,
Whatever came, upon his own right hand.

O desperate frenzy! madness of the will!
And drunkenness of the heart! that nought could quench
But floods of woe, poured from the sea of wrath,
Behind which mercy set. To think to turn
The back on life original, and live—
The creature to set up a rival throne
In the Creator's realm—to deify
A worm—and in the sight of God be proud—
To lift an arm of flesh against the shafts
Of the Omnipotent, and midst his wrath
To seek for happiness—insanity
Most mad! guilt most complete! Seest thou those worlds
That roll at various distance round the throne
Of God, innumerous, and fill the calm
Of heaven with sweetest harmony, when saints
And angels sleep—as one of these, from love
Centripetal withdrawing, and from light,
And heat, and nourishment cut off, should rush
Abandoned o'er the line that runs between
Create and increate; from ruin driven
To ruin still, through the abortive waste;
So pride from God drew off the bad; and so
Forsaken of him, he lets them ever try
Their single arm against the second death;
Amidst vindictive thunders lets them try
The stoutness of their hearts; and lets them try
To quench their thirst amidst the unfading fire;
And to reap joy where he has sown despair;
To walk alone, unguided, unbemoaned,
Where Evil dwells, and Death, and moral Night;
In utter emptiness to find enough;
In utter dark find light; and find repose
Where God with tempest plagues for evermore:
For so they wished it, so did pride desire.

Such was the cause that turned so many off
Rebelliously from God, and led them on
From vain to vainer still, in endless chase.
And such the cause that made so many cheeks
Pale, and so many knees to shake, when men
Rose from the grave; as thou shalt hear anon.

BOOK III.

ANALYSIS.

In this book the bard shows that, however man disobeyed the command to love God, truth, and virtue, they still strove to gain happiness; but which could only be gained by obedience to the command; for the attainment of which men pursued many strange and crooked paths, in none of which could it be found; as happiness was indissolubly united to virtue. Yet men pursued the phantom Hope, which danced before them in every path, and ever mocked their grasp, "till the earth, beneath them, broke and wrapt them in the grave."

Digitized by Google

Many sought for happiness in the enjoyment of pleasures, but it ever proved vain, in hope, or in possession. Many sought for happiness in the attainment of riches. This also mostly ended in bitterness and woe. Many pursued the phantom Fame, that fame which raised not in the resurrection morn, "Earthly fame," but all in vain.—Many sought happiness in dissipation, in inebriation; "deliberately resolving to be mad;" some in hawking and hunting, some in the search after curiosities, and some even in hopeless scepticism sought happiness.

And thus mankind followed vanities in despite of wisdom's warning voice; in despite of the teaching of all animated and unanimated nature; in despite of the offers of mercy continually held out to them: in spite, even, of the threatenings of death, to "make repentance vain," "men rushed on determined, to ruin, and shut their ears to all advice, to all reproof, till death, "the great teacher," convinced each, too late, that "Eternity is all."

Behold'st thou yonder, on the crystal sea,
Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
And in its hand a mirror large and bright?
'Tis truth, immutable, eternal truth,
In figure emblematical expressed.
Before it Virtue stands, and smiling sees,
Well pleased, in her reflected soul, no spot.
The sons of heaven, archangel, seraph, saint,
There daily read their own essential worth;
And, as they read, take place among the just;
Or high, or low, each as his value seems.
There each his certain interest learns, his true
Capacity; and, going thence, pursues,
Unerringly through all the tracts of thought,
As God ordains, best ends by wisest means.

The Bible held this mirror's place on earth:
But, few would read, or, reading, saw themselves.
The chase was after shadows, phantoms strange,
That in the twilight walked of Time, and mocked
The eager hunt, escaping evermore;
Yet with so many promises and looks
Of gentle sort, that he whose arms returned
Empty a thousand times, still stretched them out,
And, grasping, brought them back again unfilled.

In rapid outline thou hast heard of man;
His death; his offered life; that life by most
Despised; the Star of God—the Bible, scorned,
That else to happiness and heaven had led,
And saved my lyre from narrative of woe.
Hear now more largely of the ways of Time;
The fond pursuits and vanities of men.

Love God, love truth, love virtue, and be happy:—
These were the words first uttered in the ear
Of every being rational made, and made
For thought, or word, or deed accountable.
Most men the first forgot, the second none.
Whatever path they took, by hill or vale,
By night or day, the universal wish,
The aim, and sole intent, was happiness:
But, erring from the heaven-appointed path,
Strange tracks indeed they took through barren wastes,
And up the sandy mountain climbing toiled,
Which, pining, lay beneath the curse of God,
And nought produced: yet did the traveller look
And point his eye before him greedily,
As if he saw some verdant spot, where grew
The heavenly flower, where sprung the well of life,
Where undisturbed felicity reposed;
Though Wisdom's eye no vestige could discern,
That happiness had ever passed that way.

Wisdom was right: for still the terms remained
Unchanged, unchangeable; the terms on which
True peace was given to man; unchanged as God,
Who, in his own essential nature, binds
Eternally to virtue happiness;
Nor lets them part through all his Universe.

Philosophy, as thou shalt hear, when she
Shall have her praise—her praise and censure too,
Did much, refining and exalting man;
But could not nurse a single plant that bore
True happiness.—From age to age she toiled;
Shed from her eyes the mist that dimmed them still,
Looked forth on man; explored the wild and tame,
The savage and polite, the sea and land,
The starry heavens; and then retired far back
To meditation's silent shady seat;
And there sat pale, and thoughtfully; and weighed
With wary, most exact and scrupulous care,
Man's nature, passions, hopes, propensities,
Relations, and pursuits, in reason's scale;
And searched and weighed, and weighed and searched again,
And many a fair and goodly volume wrote,
That seemed well worded too, wherein were found
Uncountable receipts, pretending each,
If carefully attended to, to cure
Mankind of folly;—to root out the briers,
And thorns, and weeds that choked the growth of joy;—
And showing too, in plain and decent phrase,
Which sounded much like wisdom's, how to plant,
To shelter, water, culture, prune, and rear
The tree of happiness; and oft their plans
Were tried; but still the fruit was green and sour.

Of all the trees that in Earth's vineyard grew,
And with their clusters tempted man to pull
And eat,—one tree, one tree alone, the true
Celestial manna bore, which filled the soul—
The tree of Holiness—of heavenly seed;
A native of the skies; though stunted much,
And dwarfed, by Time's cold, damp, ungenial soil,
And chilling winds, yet yielding fruit so pure,
So nourishing and sweet, as, on his way,
Refreshed the pilgrim; and begot desire
Unquenchable to climb the arduous path
To where her sister plants, in their own clime,
Around the fount, and by the stream of life,

Digitized by Google

Blooming beneath the Sun that never sets,—
Bear fruit of perfect relish, fully ripe.

To plant this tree, uprooted by the fall,
To earth the Son of God descended, shed
His precious blood; and on it evermore,
From off his living wings, the Spirit shook
The dews of heaven, to nurse and hasten its growth.
Nor was this care, this infinite expense,
Not needed to secure the holy plant.
To root it out, and wither it from earth,
Hell strove with all its strength, and blew with all its blasts; and Sin, with cold, consumptive breath,
Involved it still in clouds of mortal damp.
Yet did it grow, thus kept, protected thus:
And bear the only fruit of true delight;
The only fruit worth plucking under heaven.

But few, alas! the holy plant could see,
For heavy mists that Sin around it threw
Perpetually; and few the sacrifice
Would make by which alone its clusters stooped,
And came within the reach of mortal man.
For this, of him who would approach and eat,
Was rigorously exacted to the full:—
To tread and bruise beneath the foot, the world
Entire; its prides, ambitions, hopes, desires;
Its gold, and all its broidered equipage;
To loose its loves and friendships from the heart,
And cast them off; to shut the ear against
Its praise, and all its flatteries abhor;
And having thus behind him thrown what seemed
So good and fair, then must he lowly kneel,
And with sincerity, in which the Eye
That slumbers not, nor sleeps, could see no lack,
This prayer pray:—"Lord God! thy will be done;
Thy holy will, howe'er it cross my own."
Hard labour this for flesh and blood! too hard
For most it seemed: so, turning, they the tree
Derided, as mere bramble, that could bear
No fruit of special taste; and so set out
Upon ten thousand different routes to seek
What they had left behind; to seek what they
Had lost—for still as something once possest,
And lost, true happiness appeared: all thought
They once were happy; and even while they smoked
And panted in the chase, believed themselves
More miserable to-day than yesterday—
To-morrow than to-day. When youth complained,
The ancient signer shook his hoary head,
As if he meant to say: Stop till you come
My length, and then you may have cause to sigh.
At twenty, cried the boy, who now had seen
Some blemish in his joys: How happily
Plays yonder child that busks the mimic babe,
And gathers gently flowers, and never sighs!
At forty in the fervour of pursuit,
Far on in disappointment's dreary vale,
The grave and sage-like man looked back upon
The stripling youth of plump unseared hope,
Who galloped gay and briskly up behind—
And, moaning, wished himself eighteen again.
And he of threescore years and ten, in whose
Chilled eye, fatigued with gaping after hope,
Earth's freshest verdure seemed but blasted leaves,—
Praised childhood, youth and manhood, and denounced
Old age alone as barren of all joy.
Decisive proof that men had left behind
The happiness they sought, and taken a most
Erroneous path; since every step they took
Was deeper mire. Yet did they onward run,
Pursuing Hope that danced before them still,
And beckoned them to proceed; and with their hands,
That shook and trembled piteously with age,
Grasped at the lying Shade, even till the earth
Beneath them broke, and wrapt them in the grave.

Sometimes, indeed, when wisdom in their ear
Whispered, and with its disenchanting wand
Effectually touched the sorcery of their eyes,
Directly pointing to the holy tree,
Where grew the food they sought, they turned, surprised
That they had missed so long what now they found.
As one upon whose mind some new and rare
Idea glances, and retires as quick,
Ere memory have time to write it down;
Stung with the loss, into a thoughtful cast,
He throws his face, and rubs his vexed brow;
Searches each nook and corner of his soul
With frequent care; reflects, and re-reflects,
And tries to touch relations that may start
The fugitive again; and oft is foiled;
Till something like a seeming chance, or flight
Of random fancy, when expected least,
Calls back the wanderer thought—long sought in vain.
Then does uncommon joy fill all his mind;
And still he wonders, as he holds it fast,
What lay so near he could not sooner find:
So did the man rejoice, when from his eye
The film of folly fell, and what he day
And night, and far and near, had idly searched,
Sprung up before him suddenly displayed;
So wondered why he missed the tree so long.

But, few returned from folly's giddy chase.
Few heard the voice of wisdom, or obeyed.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide
Without, within, along the flowery vale,
And up the rugged cliff, and on the top
Of mountains high, and on the ocean wave.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
And ever and anon a shout was heard:
Ho! here's the tree of life; come, eat, and live!
And round the new discoverer quick they flocked
In multitudes, and plucked, and with great haste
Devoured; and sometimes in the lips 'twas sweet,
And promised well; but in the belly, gall.
Yet after him that cried again: Ho! here's
The tree of life; again they run, and pulled,
And chewed again, and found it bitter still.
From disappointment on to disappointment,
Year after year, age after age pursued:
The child, the youth, the hoary headed man,
Alike pursued, and ne'er grew wise: for it
Was folly's most peculiar attribute,
And native act, to make experience void.

Digitized by Google

But hastily, as pleasures tasted turned
To loathing and disgust, they needed not
Even such experiment to prove them vain.
In hope or in possession, Fear, alike,
Boding disaster, stood. Over the flower
Of fairest sort, that bloomed beneath the sun,
Protected most, and sheltered from the storm,
The Spectre, like a dark and thunderous cloud
Hung dismally, and threatened, before the hand
Of him that wished could pull it to descend,
And o'er the desert drive its withered leaves;
Or, being pulled, to blast it unenjoyed,
While yet he gazed upon its loveliness,
And just began to drink its fragrance up.

Gold many hunted—sweat and bled for gold;
Waked all the night, and laboured all the day.
And what was this allurement, dost thou ask?
As dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
Which, being cast into the fire, came out
A shining thing that fools admired, and called
A god; and in devout and humble plight
Before it kneeled, the greater to the less;
And on its altar sacrificed ease, peace,
Truth, faith, integrity; good conscience, friends,
Love, charity, benevolence, and all
The sweet and tender sympathies of life;
And, to complete the horrid murderous rite
And signalize their folly, offered up
Their souls, and an eternity of bliss,
To gain them—what? an hour of dreaming joy!
A feverish hour that hasted to be done,
And ended in the bitterness of woe.

Most, for the luxuries it bought—the pomp,
The praise, the glitter, fashion, and renown—
This yellow phantom followed and adored.
But there was one in folly farther gone;
With eye awry, incurable and wild,
The laughing-stock of devils and of men,
And by his guardian angel quite given up—
The miser, who with dust inanimate
Held wedded intercourse. Ill guided wretch!
Thou might'st have seen him at the midnight hour,
When good men slept, and in light winged dreams
Ascended up to God,—in wasteful hall,
With vigilance and fasting worn to skin
And bone, and wrapt in most debasing rags,—
Thou might'st have seen him bending o'er his heaps,
And holding strange communion with his gold;
And as his thievish fancy seemed to hear
The night-man's foot approach, starting alarmed,
And in his old, decrepit, withered hand,
That palsy shook, grasping the yellow earth
To make it sure. Of all God made upright,
And in their nostrils breathed a living soul,
Most fallen, most prone, most earthly, most debased.
Of all that sold Eternity for Time,
None bargained on so easy terms with death.
Illustrious fool! nay, most inhuman wretch!
He sat among his bags, and with a look
Which hell might be ashamed of, drove the poor
Away unalmsed; and midst abundance died—
Sorest of evils! died of utter want.

Before this Shadow, in the vales of earth,
Fools saw another glide, which seemed of more
Intrinsic worth. Pleasure her name—good name
Though ill applied. A thousand forms she took
A thousand garbs she wore; in every age
And clime changing, as in her votaries changed
Desire: but, inwardly, the same in all.
Her most essential lineaments we trace;
Her general features every where alike.

Of comely form she was, and fair of face;
And underneath her eyelids sat a kind
Of witching sorcery, that nearer drew
Whoever with unguarded look beheld;
A dress of gaudy hue loosely attired
Her loveliness; her air and manner frank,
And seeming free of all disguise; her song
Enchanting; and her words, which sweetly dropt,
As honey from the comb, most large of promise,
Still prophesying days of new delight,
And rapturous nights of undecaying joy;
And in her hand, where'er she went, she held
A radiant cup that seemed of nectar full—
And by her side danced fair delusive Hope.
The fool pursued, enamoured; and the wise
Experienced man who reasoned much, and thought,
Was sometimes seen laying his wisdom down,
And vying with the stripling in the chase.

Nor wonder thou: for she was really fair;
Decked to the very taste of flesh and blood.
And many thought her sound within; and gay
And healthy at the heart; but thought amiss:
For she was full of all disease: her bones
Were rotten; consumption licked her blood, and drank
Her marrow up; her breath smelled mortally;
And in her bowels plague and fever lurked;
And in her very heart, and reins, and life,
Corruption's worm gnawed greedily unseen.

Many her haunts. Thou might'st have seen her now
With Indolence, lolling on the mid-day couch,
And whispering drowsy words; and now at dawn,
Loudly and rough, joining the sylvan horn;
Or sauntering in the park, and to the tale
Of slander giving ear; or sitting fierce,
Rude, blasphemous, malicious, raving, mad,
Where fortune to the fickle die was bound.

But chief she loved the scene of deep debauch,
Where revelry, and dance, and frantic song,
Disturbed the sleep of honest men. And where
The drunkard sat, she entered in, well pleased,
With eye brimful of wanton mirthfulness,
And urged him still to fill another cup.

And at the shadowy twilight—in the dark
And gloomy night, I looked, and saw her come
Abroad, arrayed in harlot's soft attire;
And walk without in every street, and lie
In wait at every corner, full of guile:
And, as the unwary youth of simple heart,
And void of understanding, passed, she caught
And kissed him, and, with lips of lying, said:
I have peace-offerings with me; I have paid
My vows this day; and therefore came I forth

Digitized by Google

To meet thee, and to seek thee diligently,
To seek thy face, and I have found thee here.
My bed is decked with robes of tapestry,
With carved work, and sheets of linen fine;
Perfumed with aloes, myrrh, and cinnamon.
Sweet are stolen waters! pleasant is the bread
In secret eaten! the good man is from home.
Come, let us take our fill of love till morn
Awake; let us delight ourselves with loves.
With much fair speech she caused the youth to yield;
And forced him with the flattering of her tongue.
I looked, and saw him follow to her house,
As goes the ox to slaughter; as the fool
To the correction of the stocks; or bird
That hastes into the subtle fowler's snare,
And knows not, simple thing, 'tis for its life.
I saw him enter in; and heard the door
Behind them shut; and in the dark still night,
When God's unsleeping eye alone can see,
He went to her adulterous bed. At morn
I looked, and saw him not among the youths.
I heard his father mourn, his mother weep:
For none returned that went with her. The dead
Were in her house; her guests in depths of hell;
She wove the winding-sheet of souls, and laid
Them in the urn of everlasting death.

Such was the Shadow fools pursued on earth
Under the name of pleasure,—fair outside,
Within corrupted, and corrupting still:
Ruined, and ruinous: her sure reward,
Her total recompense, was still, as he,
The bard, recorder of Earth's Seasons, sung,
"Vexation, disappointment, and remorse."
Yet at her door the young and old, and some
Who held high character among the wise,
Together stood,—and strove among themselves,
Who first should enter, and be ruined first.

Strange competition of immortal souls!
To sweat for death! to strive for misery!
But think not Pleasure told her end was death.
Even human folly then had paused at least,
And given some signs of hesitation; nor
Arrived so hot, and out of breath at woe.
Though contradicted every day by facts,
That sophistry itself would stumble o'er,
And to the very teeth a liar proved
Ten thousand times, as if unconscious still
Of inward blame, she stood, and waved her hand
And pointed to her bower, and said to all
Who passed: Take yonder flowery path; my steps
Attend; I lead the smoothest way to heaven;
This world receive as surety for the next.
And many simple men, most simple, though
Renowned for learning much, and wary skill,
Believed, and turned aside, and were undone.

Another leaf of finished Time we turn,
And read of Fame, terrestrial Fame, which died,
And rose not at the Resurrection morn.
Not that by virtue earned, the true renown,
Begun on earth, and lasting in the skies,
Worthy the lofty wish of seraphim,—
The approbation of the Eye that sees
The end from the beginning, sees from cause
To most remote effect: of it we read
In book of God's remembrance, in the book
Of life, from which the quick and dead were judged;
The book that lies upon the throne, and tells
Of glorious acts by saints and angels done;
The record of the holy, just, and good.

Of all the phantoms fleeting in the mist
Of Time, though meagre all, and ghostly thin,
Most unsubstantial, unessential shade,
Was earthly Fame. She was a voice alone,
And dwelt upon the noisy tongues of men.
She never thought; but gabbled ever on;
Applauding most what least deserved applause;
The motive, the result was nought to her:
The deed alone, though dyed in human gore
And steeped in widow's tears, if it stood out
To prominent display, she talked of much,
And roared around it with a thousand tongues.
As changed the wind her organ, so she changed
Perpetually; and whom she praised to-day,
Vexing his ear with acclamation loud,
To-morrow blamed, and hissed him out of sight.

Such was her nature, and her practice such:
But, O! her voice was sweet to mortal ears;
And touched so pleasantly the strings of pride
And vanity, which in the heart of man
Were ever strung harmonious to her note,
That many thought, to live without her song
Was rather death than life: to live unknown,
Unnoticed, unrenowned! to die unpraised!
Unepitaphed! to go down to the pit,
And moulder into dust among vile worms,
And leave no whispering of a name on earth!
Such thought was cold about the heart, and chilled
The blood. Who could endure it? who could choose,
Without a struggle, to be swept away
From all remembrance, and have part no more
With living men? Philosophy failed here;
And self-approving pride. Hence it became
The aim of most, and main pursuit, to win
A name—to leave some vestige as they passed,
That following ages might discern they once
Had been on earth, and acted something there.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried
The man of science to the shade retired,
And laid his head upon his hand, in mood
Of awful thoughtfulness; and dived, and dived
Again—deeper and deeper still, to sound
The cause remote—resolved, before he died
To make some grand discovery, by which
He should be known to all posterity.

And in the silent vigils of the night,
When uninspired men reposed, the bard,
Ghastly of countenance, and from his eye
Oft streaming wild unearthly fire, sat up
And sent imagination forth; and searched
The far and near—heaven, earth, and gloomy hell—
For fiction new, for thought unthought before;
And when some curious rare idea peered
Upon his mind, he dipped his hasty pen,

Digitized by Google

And by the glimmering lamp, or moonlight beam,
That thro' his lattice peeped, wrote fondly down
What seemed in truth imperishable song.

And sometimes too, the reverend divine,
In meditation deep of holy things,
And vanities of Time, heard Fame's sweet voice
Approach his ear—and hung another flower,
Of earthly sort, about the sacred truth;
And ventured whiles to mix the bitter text,
With relish suited to the sinner's taste.

And ofttimes too, the simple hind, who seemed
Ambitionless, arrayed in humble garb,
While round him, spreading, fed his harmless flock,
Sitting was seen, by some wild warbling brook,
Carving his name upon his favourite staff:
Or, in ill favoured letters, tracing it
Upon the aged thorn; or on the face
Of some conspicuous oft frequented stone,
With persevering wondrous industry;
And hoping, as he toiled amain, and saw
The characters take form, some other wight,
Long after he was dead, and in his grave,
Should loiter there at noon and read his name.

In purple some, and some in rags, stood forth
For reputation; some displayed a limb
Well-fashioned: some of lowlier mind, a cane
Of curious workmanship, and marvellous twist.
In strength some sought it, and in beauty more.
Long, long the fair one laboured at the glass,
And, being tired, called in auxiliar skill,
To have her sails, before she went abroad,
Full spread, and nicely set, to catch the gale
Of praise. And much she caught, and much deserved,
When outward loveliness was index fair
Of purity within: but oft, alas!
The bloom was on the skin alone; and when
She saw, sad sight! the roses on her cheek
Wither, and heard the voice of fame retire
And die away, she heaved most piteous sighs,
And wept most lamentable tears: and whiles,
In wild delirium, made rash attempt—
Unholy mimickry of Nature's work!—
To re-create, with frail and mortal things,
Her wither'd face. Attempt how fond and vain!
Her frame itself soon mouldered down to dust;
And, in the land of deep forgetfulness,
Her beauty and her name were laid beside
Eternal silence, and the loathsome worm;
Into whose darkness flattery ventured not;
Where none had ears to hear the voice of Fame.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried.
And awful, oft, the wickedness they wrought.
To be observed, some scrambled up to thrones,
And sat in vestures dripping wet with gore.
The warrior dipped his sword in blood, and wrote
His name on lands and cities desolate.
The rich bought fields, and houses built, and raised
The monumental piles up to the clouds,
And called them by their names. And, strange to tell!
Rather than be unknown, and pass away
Obscurely to the grave, some, small of soul,
That else had perished unobserved, acquired
Considerable renown by oaths profane,
By jesting boldly with all sacred things,
And uttering fearlessly whate'er occurred;—
Wild, blasphemous, perditionable thoughts,
That Satan in them moved; by wiser men
Suppressed, and quickly banished from the mind

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried:
But all in vain. Who grasped at earthly fame,
Grasped wind: nay, worse, a serpent grasped, that through
His hand slid smoothly, and was gone; but left
A sting behind which wrought him endless pain.
For oft her voice was old Abaddon's lure,
By which he charmed the foolish soul to death.
So happiness was sought in pleasure, gold,
Renown—by many sought. But should I sing
Of all the trifling race, my time, thy faith,
Would fail—of things erectly organized,
And having rational, articulate voice,
And claiming outward brotherhood with man:
Of him that laboured sorely, in his sweat
Smoking afar, then hurried to the wine,
Deliberately resolving to be mad:
Of him who taught the ravenous bird to fly
This way or that, thereby supremely blest:
Or rode in fury with the howling pack,
Affronting much the noble animal,
He spurred into such company: of him
Who down into the bowels of the earth
Descended deeply, to bring up the wreck
Of some old earthen ware, which having stowed,
With every proper care, he home returned
O'er many a sea, and many a league of land,
Triumphantly to show the marvellous prize:
And him that vexed his brain, and theories built
Of gossamer upon the brittle winds;
Perplexed exceedingly why shells were found
Upon the mountain tops; but wondering not
Why shells were found at all, more wondrous still!
Of him who strange enjoyment took in tales
Of fairy folk, and sleepless ghosts, and sounds
Unearthly, whispering in the ear of night
Disastrous things: and him who still foretold
Calamity which never came, and lived
In terror all his days of comets rude,
That should unmannerly and lawless drive
Athwart the path of Earth, and burn mankind:
As if the appointed hour of doom, by God
Appointed, ere its time should come: as if
Too small the number of substantial ills,
And real fears to vex the sons of men.—
These,—had they not possessed immortal souls,
And been accountable, might have been past
With laughter, and forgot; but as it was,
And is—their folly asks a serious tear.

Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
For happiness. Take one example more—
So strange that common fools looked on amazed;
And wise and sober men together drew,
And trembling stood; and angels in the heavens
Grew pale, and talked of vengeance as at hand—
The sceptic's route—the unbeliever's, who,
Despising reason, revelation, God,

Digitized by Google

And kicking 'gainst the pricks of conscience, rushed
Deliriously upon the bossy shield
Of the Omnipotent; and in his heart
Purposed to deify the idol Chance.
And laboured hard—oh, labour worse than nought!
And toiled with dark and crooked reasoning,
To make the fair and lovely Earth, which dwelt
In sight of Heaven, a cold and fatherless,
Forsaken thing, that wandered on, forlorn
Undestined, uncompassioned, unupheld;
A vapour eddying in the whirl of chance,
And soon to vanish everlastingly.
He travailed sorely, and made many a tack,
His sails oft shifting, to arrive—dread thought!
Arrive at utter nothingness; and have
Being no more—no feeling, memory,
No lingering consciousness that e'er he was.
Guilt's midnight wish! last, most abhorred thought!
Most desperate effort of extremest sin!
Others, preoccupied, ne'er saw true hope;
He, seeing, aimed to stab her to the heart,
And with infernal chemistry to wring
The last sweet drop from sorrow's cup of gall;
To quench the only ray that cheered the earth,
And leave mankind in night which had no star.
Others the streams of pleasure troubled; he
Toiled much to dry her very fountain head.
Unpardonable man! sold under sin!
He was the Devil's pioneer, who cut
The fences down of virtue, sapped her walls,
And opened a smooth and easy way to death.
Traitor to all existence! to all life!
Soul-suicide! determined foe of being!
Intended murderer of God, Most High!
Strange road, most strange! to seek for happiness!
Hell's mad-houses are full of such; too fierce,
Too furiously insane, and desperate,
To rage unbound 'mong evil spirits damned!

Fertile was earth in many things: not least
In fools, who mercy both and judgment scorned;
Scorned love, experience scorned: and onward rushed
To swift destruction, giving all reproof,
And all instruction, to the winds; and much
Of both they had—and much despised of both.

Wisdom took up her harp, and stood in place
Of frequent concourse—stood in every gate,
By every way, and walked in every street;
And, lifting up her voice, proclaimed: Be wise,
Ye fools! be of an understanding heart.
Forsake the wicked: come not near his house:
Pass by: make haste: depart, and turn away.
Me follow—me, whose ways are pleasantness,
Whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy.
The Seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude; and as they passed,
Gave warning of the lapse of time, that else
Had stolen unheeded by: the gentle Flowers
Retired, and, stooping o'er the wilderness,
Talked of humility, and peace, and love.
The Dews came down unseen at evening-tide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity.
With arm in arm the forest rose on high,
And lesson gave of brotherly regard.
And, on the rugged mountain-brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone—the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still
To courage in distress exhorted loud.
The flocks, the herds, the birds, the streams the breeze,
Attuned the heart to melody and love.
Mercy stood in the cloud, with eye that wept:
Essential love; and, from her glorious bow,
Bending to kiss the earth in token of peace,
With her own lips, her gracious lips, which God
Of sweetest accent made, she whispered still,
She whispered to Revenge—"Forgive, forgive!"
The Sun rejoicing round the earth, announced
Daily the wisdom, power, and love of God.
The Moon awoke, and from her maiden face,
Shedding her cloudy locks, looked meekly forth,
And with her virgin stars walked in the heavens,
Walked nightly there, conversing as she walked,
Of purity, and holiness, and God.
In dreams and visions, Sleep instructed much.
Day uttered speech to day, and night to night
Taught knowledge. Silence had a tongue: the grave,
The darkness, and the lonely waste, had each
A tongue, that ever said—Man! think of God!
Think of thyself! think of eternity!
Fear God, the thunders said; fear God, the waves;
Fear God, the lightning of the storm replied;
Fear God, deep loudly answered back to deep.
And, in the temples of the Holy One—
Messiah's messengers, the faithful few—
Faithful 'mong many false—the Bible opened,
And cried: Repent! repent ye sons of men!
Believe, be saved: and reasoned awfully
Of temperance, righteousness, and judgment soon
To come—of ever-during life and death.
And chosen bards from age to age awoke
The sacred lyre, and full on folly's ear,
Numbers of righteous indignation poured.
And God, omnipotent, when mercy failed,
Made bare his holy arm; and with the stroke
Of vengeance smote; the fountains of the deep
Broke up; heaven's windows opened, and sent on men
A flood of wrath; sent plague and famine forth;
With earthquake rocked the world beneath; with storms
Above laid cities waste, and turned fat lands
To barrenness; and with the sword of war
In fury marched, and gave them blood to drink.
Angels remonstrated: Mercy beseeched:
Heaven smiled, and frowned: Hell groaned: Time fled: Death shook
His dart, and threatened to make repentance vain.—
Incredible assertion! men rushed on
Determinedly to ruin: shut their ears,
Their eyes to all advice, to all reproof—
O'er mercy and o'er judgment downward rushed
To misery: and, most incredible
Of all! to misery rushed along the way
Of disappointment and remorse, where still
At every step, adders, in Pleasure's form,
Stung mortally; and Joys,—whose bloomy cheeks

Digitized by Google

Seemed glowing high with immortality,
Whose bosom prophesied superfluous bliss,
While in the arms received, and locked in close
And riotous embrace, turned pale, and cold,
And died, and smelled of putrefaction rank:
Turned, in the very moment of delight,
A loathsome, and heavy corpse, that with the clear
And hollow eyes of Death, stared horribly.

All tribes, all generations of the earth,
Thus wantonly to ruin drove alike.
We heard indeed of golden and silver days;
And of primeval innocence unstained—
A pagan tale! but by baptized bards,
Philosophers, and statesmen, who were still
Held wise and cunning men, talked of so much,
That most believed it so, and asked not why.

The pair, the family first made, were ill;
And for their great peculiar sin incurred
The Curse, and left it due to all their race;
And bold example gave of every crime—
Hate, murder, unbelief, reproach, revenge.
A time, 'tis true, there came, of which thou soon
Shalt hear—the Sabbath Day, the Jubilee
Of Earth, when righteousness and peace prevailed.
This time except, who writes the history
Of men, and writes it true, must write them bad.
Who reads, must read of violence and blood.
The man who could the story of one day
Peruse, the wrongs, oppressions, cruelties,
Deceits, and perjuries, and vanities,
Rewarded worthlessness, rejected worth,
Assassinations, robberies, thefts, and wars,
Disastrous accidents, life thrown away,
Divinity insulted, Heaven despised,
Religion scorned;—and not been sick at night,
And sad, had gathered greater store of mirth,
Than ever wise man in the world could find.

One cause of folly, one especial cause,
Was this—few knew what wisdom was, though well
Defined in God's own words, and printed large,
On heaven and earth in characters of light,
And sounded in the ear by every wind.

Wisdom is humble, said the voice of God.
'Tis proud, the world replied. Wisdom, said God,
Forgives, forbears, and suffers, not for fear
Of man, but God. Wisdom revenges, said
The world; is quick and deadly of resentment;
Thrusts at the very shadow of affront,
And hastes, by death, to wipe its honour clean.
Wisdom, said God, loves enemies, entreats,
Solicits, begs for peace. Wisdom, replied
The world, hates enemies; will not ask peace,
Conditions spurns, and triumphs in their fall.
Wisdom mistrusts itself, and leans on heaven,
Said God. It trusts and leans upon itself,
The world replied. Wisdom retires, said God,
And counts it bravery to bear reproach,
And shame, and lowly poverty upright;
And weeps with all who have just cause to weep.
Wisdom, replied the world, struts forth to gaze;
Treads the broad stage of life with clamorous foot;
Attracts all praises; counts it bravery
Alone to wield the sword, and rush on death;
And never weeps, but for its own disgrace.
Wisdom, said God, is highest, when it stoops
Lowest before the Holy Throne, throws down
Its crown abased, forgets itself, admires,
And breathes adoring praise. There wisdom stoops
Indeed, the world replied—there stoops, because
It must: but stoops with dignity; and thinks
And meditates the while of inward worth.

Thus did Almighty God, and thus the world,
Wisdom define. And most the world believed,
And boldly called the truth of God a lie.
Hence, he that to the worldly wisdom shaped
His character, became the favourite
Of men—was honourable termed; a man
Of spirit; noble, glorious, lofty soul!
And as he crossed the earth in chase of dreams,
Received prodigious shouts of warm applause.
Hence, who to godly wisdom framed his life,
Was counted mean, and spiritless, and vile;
And as he walked obscurely in the path
Which led to heaven, fools hissed with serpent tongue
And poured contempt upon his holy head:
And poured contempt on all who praised his name

But false as this account of wisdom was—
The world's I mean—it was its best: the creed
Of sober, grave, and philosophic men,
With much research and cogitation framed;
Of men, who with the vulgar scorned to sit.

The popular belief seemed rather worse,
When heard replying to the voice of truth.
The wise man, said the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys, far on, the endless line of life;
Values his soul; thinks of eternity;
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil; lives on hope, on hope, the fruit
Of faith; looks upward; purifies his soul;
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his father's house;
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.

The multitude aloud replied, (replied
By practice, for they were no bookish men,
Nor apt to form their principles in words,)
The wise man first of all eradicates,
As much as possible, from out his mind,
All thought of death, God, and eternity;
Admires the world, and thinks of Time alone,
Avoids the Bible, all reproof avoids;
Rocks conscience, if he can, asleep; puts out
The eye of reason; prisons, tortures, binds;
And makes her thus, by violence and force,
Give wicked evidence against herself:
Lets passion loose; the substance leaves; pursues
The shadow vehemently, but ne'er o'ertakes;
Puts by the cup of holiness and joy;
And drinks, carouses deeply in the bowl
Of death; grovels in dust; pollutes, destroys
His soul: is miserable to acquire
More misery; deceives to be deceived;
Strives, labours to the last, to shun the truth;
Strives, labours to the last, to damn himself:

Digitized by Google

Turns desperate, shudders, groans, blasphemes, and dies,
And sinks—where could he else?—to endless woe,
And drinks the wine of God's eternal wrath.

The learned thus, and thus the unlearned world,
Wisdom defined—in sound they disagreed;
In substance, in effect, in end the same;
And equally to God and truth opposed;
Opposed as darkness to the light of heaven.
Yet were there some that seemed well-meaning men,
Who systems planned, expressed in supple words,
Which praised the man as wisest, that in one
United both; pleased God, and pleased the world;
And with the saint, and with the sinner had,
Changing his garb, unseen, a good report.
And many thought their definition best,
And in their wisdom grew exceeding wise.

Union abhorred! dissimulation vain!
Could holiness embrace the harlot sin?
Could life wed death? could God with Mammon dwell?
Oh, foolish men! oh, men for ever lost!
In spite of mercy lost, in spite of wrath!
In spite of Disappointment and Remorse,
Which made the way to ruin ruinous!

Hear what they were:—the progeny of sin
Alike; and oft combined; but differing much
In mode of giving pain. As felt the gross,
Material part, when in the furnace cast,
So felt the soul; the victim of remorse.
It was a fire which on the verge of God's
Commandments burned, and on the the vitals fed
Of all who passed. Who passed, there met remorse;
A violent fever seized his soul; the heavens
Above, the earth beneath, seemed glowing brass,
Heated seven times; he heard dread voices speak,
And mutter horrid prophecies of pain,
Severer and severer yet to come:
And as he writhed and quivered, scorched within,
The fury round his torrid temples flapped
Her fiery wings, and breathed upon his lips,
And parched tongue, the withered blast's of hell.
It was the suffering begun, thou saw'st
In symbol of the Worm that never dies.

The other—Disappointment, rather seemed
Negation of delight. It was a thing
Sluggish and torpid, tending towards death.
Its breath was cold, and made the sportive blood
Stagnant, and dull, and heavy round the wheels
Of life: the roots of that whereon it blew,
Decayed, and with the genial soil no more
Held sympathy—the leaves, the branches drooped,
And mouldered slowly down to formless dust;
Not tossed and driven by violence of winds;
But withering where they sprung, and rotting there.
Long disappointed, disappointed still,
The hopeless man, hopeless in his main wish,
As if returning back to nothing, felt;
In strange vacuity of being hung,
And rolled and rolled his eye on emptiness
That seemed to grow more empty every hour.
—One of this mood I do remember well:
We name him not—what now are earthly names?
In humble dwelling born, retired, remote,
In rural quietude; 'mong hills, and streams,
And melancholy deserts, where the sun
Saw, as he passed, a shepherd only, here
And there, watching his little flock; or heard
The ploughman talking to his steers—his hopes,
His morning hopes, awoke before him, smiling,
Among the dews, and holy mountain airs;
And fancy coloured them with every hue
Of heavenly loveliness; but soon his dreams
Of childhood fled away—those rainbow dreams,
So innocent and fair, that withered age,
Even at the grave, cleared up his dusty eye,
And, passing all between, looked fondly back
To see them once again ere he departed.
These fled away—and anxious thought, that wished
To go, yet whither knew not well to go,
Possessed his soul, and held it still a while.
He listened, and heard from far the voice of Fame—
Heard, and was charmed; and deep and sudden vow,
Of resolution made to be renowned;
And deeper vowed again to keep his vow.
His parents saw—his parents, whom God made
Of kindest heart—saw, and indulged his hope.
The ancient page he turned; read much; thought much;
And with old bards of honourable name
Measured his soul severely; and looked up
To fame, ambitious of no second place.
Hope grew from inward faith, and promised fair:
And out before him opened many a path
Ascending, where the laurel highest waved
Her branch of endless green. He stood admiring;
But stood, admired, not long. The harp he seized;
The harp he loved—loved better than his life
The harp which uttered deepest notes, and held
The ear of thought a captive to its song.
He searched, and meditated much; and whiles
With rapturous hand in secret touched the lyre,
Aiming at glorious strains—and searched again
For theme deserving of immortal verse:
Chose now, and now refused unsatisfied;
Pleased, then displeased, and hesitating still.

Thus stood his mind, when round him came a cloud,
Slowly and heavily it came; a cloud
Of ills we mention not: enough to say
'Twas cold, and dead, impenetrable gloom.
He saw its dark approach; and saw his hopes,
One after one, put out, as nearer still
It drew his soul: but fainted not at first;
Fainted not soon. He knew the lot of man
Was trouble, and prepared to bear the worst:
Endure whate'er should come, without a sigh
Endure, and drink, even to the very dregs,
The bitterest cup that Time could measure out;
And, having done, look up, and ask for more.

Digitized by Google

He called Philosophy, and with his heart
Reasoned: he called Religion too, but called
Reluctantly, and therefore was not heard.
Ashamed to be o'ermatched by earthly woes,
He sought, and sought with eyes that dimmed apace,
To find some avenue to light, some place
On which to rest a hope—but sought in vain.
Dark and darker still the darkness grew:
At length he sunk, and Disappointment stood
His only comforter, and mournfully
Told all was past. His interest in life,
In being, ceased: and now he seemed to feel,
And shuddered as he felt, his powers of mind
Decaying in the spring time of his day:
The vigorous weak became; the clear, obscure;
Memory gave up her charge; Decision reeled;
And from her flight Fancy returned, returned
Because she found no nourishment abroad.
The blue heavens withered, and the moon, and sun,
And all the stars, and the green earth, and morn
And evening withered; and the eyes, and smiles,
And faces of all men and women withered;
Withered to him; and all the universe,
Like something which had been, appeared; but now
Was dead and mouldering fast away. He tried
No more to hope: wished to forget his vow:
Wished to forget his harp; then ceased to wish.
That was his last. Enjoyment now was done.
He had no hope—no wish—and scarce a fear.
Of being sensible, and sensible
Of loss, he as some atom seemed, which God
Had made superfluously, and needed not
To build creation with; but back again
To Nothing threw, and left it in the void,
With everlasting sense that once it was.

Oh, who can tell what days, what nights he spent
Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless woe!
And who can tell how many, glorious once,
To others and themselves of promise full,
Conducted to this pass of human thought,
This wilderness of intellectual death,
Wasted and pined, and vanished from the earth,
Leaving no vestige of memorial there.

It was not so with him: when thus he lay,
Forlorn of heart, withered and desolate,
As leaf of Autumn, which the wolfish winds,
Selecting from its falling sisters, chase
Far from its native grove, to lifeless wastes,
And leave it there alone, to be forgotten
Eternally—God passed in mercy by—
His praise be ever new!—and on him breathed
And bade him live; and put into his hands
A holy harp, into his lips a song,
That rolled its numbers down the tide of Time.
Ambitious now but little to be praised
Of men alone; ambitious most to be
Approved of God, the Judge of all; and have
His name recorded in the book of life.

Such things were Disappointment and Remorse;
And oft united both, as friends severe,
To teach men wisdom: but the fool, untaught,
Was foolish still. His ear he stopped; his eyes
He shut; and blindly, deafly obstinate,
Forced desperately his way from woe to woe.

One place, one only place, there was on earth
Where no man ere was fool—however mad.
"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."
Ah! 'twas a truth most true; and sung in Time
And to the sons of men, by one well known
On earth for lofty verse, and lofty sense.
Much hast thou seen, fair youth! much heard: but thou
Hast never seen a death-bed, never heard
A dying groan. Men saw it often: 'twas sad,
To all most sorrowful and sad—to guilt
'Twas anguish, terror, darkness, without bow.
But O, it had a most convincing tongue,
A potent oratory, that secured
Most mute attention: and it spoke the truth
So boldly, plainly, perfectly distinct,
That none the meaning could mistake, or doubt;
And had withal a disenchanting power,
A most omnipotent and wondrous power,
Which in a moment broke, for ever broke,
And utterly dissolved the charms, and spells,
And cunning sorceries of Earth and Hell.
And thus it spoke to him who ghastly lay,
And struggled for another breath: Earth's cup
Is poisoned; her renown, most infamous;
Her gold, seem as it may, is really dust;
Her titles, slanderous names; her praise, reproach;
Her strength, an idiot's boast; her wisdom, blind;
Her gain, eternal loss; her hope, a dream;
Her love, her friendship, enmity with God;
Her promises, a lie; her smile, a harlot's;
Her beauty, paint, and rotten within; her pleasures,
Deadly assassins masked; her laughter, grief;
Her breasts, the sting of Death; her total sum,
Her all, most utter vanity; and all
Her lovers mad, insane most grievously,
And most insane, because they know it not.

Thus did the mighty reasoner, Death, declare;
And volumes more: and in one word confirmed
The Bible whole—Eternity is all.
But few spectators, few believed of those
Who staid behind. The wisest, best of men,
Believed not to the letter full; but turned,
And on the world looked forth, as if they thought
The well-trimmed hypocrite had something still
Of inward worth: the dying man alone
Gave faithful audience, and the words of Death
To the last jot believed; believed and felt;
But oft, alas! believed and felt too late.

And had Earth, then, no joys? no native sweets
No happiness, that one who spoke the truth
Might call her own? She had; true, native sweets
Indigenous delights, which up the Tree
Of holiness, embracing as they grew,
Ascended and bore fruit of heavenly taste,
In pleasant memory held, and talked of oft.
By yonder saints who walk the golden streets
Of New Jerusalem, and compass round
The throne, with nearest vision blest—of these
Hereafter thou shalt hear, delighted hear,
One page of beauty in the life of man.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.

ANALYSIS.

The essence of earthly liberty and independence was united with lust for power; "each sought to make all subject to his will," while real liberty was the freedom from sin: he only was free "whom the truth of God made free."

Strange conflicts exhibited by the inconsistent and opposite principles of the Christian heart. Yet final victory was found on the side of holiness, and after all his internal struggles, the Christian was triumphant, and brought to the world of glory.

The Books composed in Time, together with their authors were doomed to oblivion under the curse which returns dust to dust.

The Books entitled "The Medicine of the Mind," which were written for the help of virtue, were alone exempted from oblivion.

The inscrutable and mysterious providences of God, why deeds decreed were accountable, the Trinity, and Incarnation, were subjects, which Theology, Philosophy, Fancy, and finite wisdom, toiled in vain to comprehend.

The unequal distribution of worldly possessions and intellectual gifts, plainly taught that God did not estimate men by outward circumstances only, or by their knowledge, but by their moral worth. Illustrated by the history of the gifted Byron.

The world had much of strange and wonderful:
In passion much, in action, reason, will;
And much in Providence, which still retired
From human eye, and led philosophy,
That ill her ignorance liked to own, through dark
And dangerous paths of speculation wild.
Some striking features, as we pass, we mark,
In order such as memory suggests.

One passion prominent appears—the lust
Of power, which oftimes took the fairer name
Of liberty, and hung the popular flag
Of freedom out. Many, indeed, its names.
When on the throne it sat, and round the neck
Of millions riveted its iron chain,
And on the shoulders of the people laid
Burdens unmerciful—it title took
Of tyranny, oppression, despotism;
And every tongue was weary cursing it.
When in the multitude it gathered strength,
And, like an ocean bursting from its bounds,
Long beat in vain, went forth resistlessly,
It bore the stamp and designation, then,
Of popular fury, anarchy, rebellion—
And honest men bewailed all order void;
All laws, annulled; all property, destroyed:
The venerable, murdered in the streets;
The wise, despised; streams, red with human blood;
Harvests, beneath the frantic foot trode down;
Lands, desolate; and famine, at the door.

These are a part; but other names it had,
Innumerous as the shapes and robes it wore.
But under every name—in nature still
Invariably the same, and always bad.
We own, indeed, that oft against itself
It fought, and sceptre both and people gave
An equal aid, as long exemplified
In Albion's isle—Albion, queen of the seas—
And in the struggle, something like a kind
Of civil liberty grew up, the best
Of mere terrestrial root; but sickly too,
And living only, strange to tell! in strife
Of factions equally contending; dead,
That very moment dead, that one prevailed.

Conflicting cruelly against itself,
By its own hand it fell; part slaying part.
And men who noticed not the suicide,
Stood wondering much, why earth from age to age,
Was still enslaved, and erring causes gave.

This was earth's liberty, its nature this,
However named, in whomsoever found—
And found it was in all of woman born—
Each man to make all subject to his will;
To make them do, undo, eat, drink, stand, move,
Talk, think, and feel, exactly as he chose.
Hence the eternal strife of brotherhoods,
Of individuals, families, commonwealths.
The root from which it grew was pride—bad root!
And bad the fruit it bore. Then wonder not
That long the nations from it richly reaped
Oppression, slavery, tyranny, and war;
Confusion, desolation, trouble, shame.
And, marvellous though it seem, this monster, when
It took the name of slavery, as oft
It did, had advocates to plead its cause;
Beings that walked erect, and spoke like men;
Of Christian parentage descended too,
And dipt in the baptismal font, as sign
Of dedication to the Prince who bowed
To death, to set the sin-bound prisoner free.

Unchristian thought! on what pretence soe'er
Of right inherited, or else acquired;
Of loss, or profit, or what plea you name,
To buy and sell, to barter, whip, and hold
In chains, a being of celestial make—
Of kindred form, of kindred faculties;
Of kindred feelings, passions, thoughts, desires;
Born free, and heir of an immortal hope:—
Thought villanous, absurd, detestable!
Unworthy to be harboured in a fiend!
And only overreached in wickedness
By that, birth too of earthly liberty,
Which aimed to make a reasonable man
By legislation think, and by the sword
Believe. This was that liberty renowned,
Those equal rights of Greece and Rome, where men,
All, but a few, were bought, and sold, and scourged,
And killed, as interest or caprice enjoined:
In aftertimes talked of, written of so much,
That most, by sound and custom led away,

Digitized by Google

Believed the essence answered to the name.
Historians on this theme were long and warm.
Statesmen, drunk with the fumes of vain debate,
In lofty swelling phrase, called it perfection;
Philosophers its rise, advance, and fall,
Traced carefully; and poets kindled still
As memory brought it up—their lips were touched
With fire, and uttered words that men adored,
Even he—true bard of Zion, holy man!
To whom the Bible taught this precious verse:
"He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,"
By fashion, though by fashion little swayed,
Scarce kept his harp from pagan freedom's praise.

The captive prophet, whom Jehovah gave
The future years, described it best, when he
Beheld it rise in vision of the night—
A dreadful beast, and terrible, and strong
Exceedingly, with mighty iron teeth;
And lo, it brake in pieces, and devoured,
And stamped the residue beneath its feet!

True liberty was Christian, sanctified,
Baptized, and found in Christian hearts alone.
First born of Virtue, daughter of the skies,
Nursling of truth divine; sister of all
The graces, meekness, holiness, and love:
Giving to God, and man, and all below,
That symptom showed of sensible existence,
Their due unasked; fear to whom fear was due;
To all, respect, benevolence, and love.
Companion of religion! where she came
There freedom came: where dwelt, there freedom dwelt;
Ruled where she ruled, expired where she expired.
"He was the freeman whom the truth made free:"—
Who first of all, the bands of Satan broke;
Who broke the bands of Sin; and for his soul,
In spite of fools consulted seriously;
In spite of fashion persevered in good;
In spite of wealth or poverty, upright;
Who did as reason, not as fancy bade;
Who heard temptation sing, and yet turned not
Aside; saw sin bedeck her flowery bed,
And yet would not go up; felt at his heart
The sword unsheathed, yet would not sell the truth;
Who, having power, had not the will to hurt;
Who blushed alike to be, or have a slave;
Who blushed at nought but sin, feared nought but God:
Who, finally, in strong integrity
Of soul, 'midst want of riches, or disgrace,
Uplifted calmly sat, and heard the waves
Of stormy folly breaking at his feet;
Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul reproach,
And both despised sincerely; seeking this
Alone—the approbation of his God,
Which still with conscience witnessed to his peace.

This, this is freedom, such as angels use,
And kindred to the liberty of God.
First born of Virtue! daughter of the skies!
The man, the state in whom she ruled, was free
All else were slaves of Satan, Sin, and Death.

Already thou hast something heard of good
And ill, of vice and virtue, perfect each:
Of those redeemed, or else abandoned quite;
And more shalt hear, when at the judgment day
The characters we of mankind review.——
Seems aught which thou hast heard astonishing?
A greater wonder now thy audience asks:
Phenomena in all the universe;
Of moral being most anomalous;
Inexplicable most, and wonderful.
I'll introduce thee to a single heart;
A human heart: we enter not the worst;
But one by God's renewing spirit touched;
A Christian heart, awaked from sleep of sin.
What seest thou here? what mark'st? observe it well.—
Will, passion, reason; hopes, fears; joy, distress
Peace, turbulence; simplicity, deceit;
Good, ill; corruption, immortality;
A temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet
Oft lodging fiends; the dwelling place of all
The heavenly virtues—charity and truth,
Humility, and holiness, and love;
And yet the common haunt of anger, pride,
Hatred, revenge, and passions foul with lust;
Allied to heaven, yet parleying oft with hell:
A soldier listed in Messiah's band,
Yet giving quarter to Abaddon's troops:
With seraphs drinking from the well of life,
And yet carousing in the cup of death;
An heir of heaven, and walking thitherward,
Yet casting back a covetous eye on earth:
Emblem of strength, and weakness; loving now
And now abhorring sin; indulging now,
And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,
With joy unspeakable, and full of glory,
Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust.
A man willing to do, and doing not;
Doing, and willing not; embracing what
He hates, what most he loves abandoning.
Half saint, and sinner half—half life, half death:
Commixture strange of Heaven, and Earth, and Hell!

What seest thou here? what mark'st? a battle field—
Two banners spread—two dreadful fronts of war,
In shock of opposition fierce engaged.—
God, angels, saw whole empires rise in arms;
Saw kings exalted; heard them tumbled down;
And others raised,—and heeded not: but here,
God, angels, looked; God, angels, fought; and Hell,
With all his legions, fought: here error fought
With truth; with darkness, light; and life with death:
And here not kingdoms, reputations, worlds,
Were won; the strife was for Eternity;
The victory was never-ending bliss;
The badge a chaplet from the tree of life.

While thus within contending armies strove.
Without the Christian had his trouble too
For as by God's unalterable laws.

Digitized by Google

And ceremonial of the heaven of heavens,
Virtue takes place of all, and worthiest deeds
Sit highest at the feast of bliss; on Earth
The opposite was fashion's rule polite.
Virtue the lowest place at table took,
Or served, or was shut out: the Christian still
Was mocked, derided, persecuted, slain:
And Slander, worse than mockery, or sword,
Or death, stood nightly by her horrid forge,
And fabricated lies to stain his name,
And wound his peace—but still he had a source
Of happiness, that men could neither give
Nor take away: the avenues that led
To immortality before him lay;
He saw, with faith's far reaching eye, the fount
Of life, his Father's house, his Saviour God,
And borrowed thence to help his present want.

Encountered thus with enemies without,
Within, like bark that meets opposing winds
And floods, this way, now that, she steers athwart;
Tossed by the wave, and driven by the storm;
But still the pilot, ancient at the helm,
The harbour keeps in eye; and after much
Of danger past, and many a prayer rude,
He runs her safely in.—So was the man
Of God, beset, so tossed by adverse winds;
And so his eye upon the land of life
He kept. Virtue grew daily stronger, sin
Decayed; his enemies repulsed, retired;
Till at the stature of a perfect man
In Christ arrived, and, with the Spirit filled,
He gained the harbour of eternal rest.

But think not virtue else than dwells in God
Essentially, was perfect, without spot.
Examine yonder suns! at distance seen,
How bright they burn! how gloriously they shine,
Mantling the worlds around in beamy light!
But nearer viewed, we through their lustre see
Some dark behind: so virtue was on earth,
So is in heaven, and so shall always be.
Though good it seem, immaculate, and fair,
Exceedingly to saint or angel's gaze,
The uncreated Eye, that searches all,
Sees it imperfect; sees, but blames not; sees,
Well-pleased; and best with those who deepest dive
Into themselves, and know themselves the most:
Taught thence in humbler reverence to bow
Before the Holy One; and oftener view
His excellence, that in them still may rise,
And grow his likeness, growing evermore.

Nor think that any, born of Adam's race,
In his own proper virtue, entered heaven.
Once fallen from God and perfect holiness,
No being, unassisted, e'er could rise,
Or sanctify the sin-polluted soul.
Oft was the trial made; but vainly made:
So oft as men in Earth's best livery clad,
However fair, approached the gates of heaven,
And stood presented to the eye of God,
Their impious pride so oft his soul abhorred.
Vain hope! in patch-work of terrestial grain,
To be received into the courts above;
As vain, as towards yonder suns to soar
On wing of waxen plumage melting soon.

Look round, and view those numbers infinite,
That stand before the throne, and in their hands
Palms waving high, token of victory
For battles won—these are the sons of men
Redeemed, the ransomed of the Lamb of God:
All these, and millions more of kindred blood,
Who now are out on messages of love—
All these—their virtue, beauty, excellence,
And joy, are purchase of redeeming blood;
Their glory, bounty of redeeming love.—
O love divine!—harp, lift thy voice on high!
Shout, angels! shout aloud, ye sons of men!
And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame!
My lyre, be eloquent with endless praise!
O love divine! immeasurable love!
Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,
Without beginning, endless, boundless love!
Above all asking giving far, to those
Who nought deserved, who nought deserved but death.
Saving the vilest! saving me! O love
Divine! O Saviour God! O Lamb, once slain!
At thought of thee, thy love, thy flowing blood,
All thoughts decay; all things remembered, fade
All hopes return; all actions done by men
Or angels, disappear, absorbed and lost:
All fly—as from the great white throne, which he,
The prophet, saw, in vision wrapt—the heavens,
And earth, and sun, and moon, and starry host,
Confounded fled, and found a place no more.

One glance of wonder, as we pass, deserve
The books of Time. Productive was the world,
In many things; but most in books: like swarms
Of locusts, which God sent to vex the land
Rebellious long, admonished long in vain,
Their numbers they poured annually on man,
From heads conceiving still: perpetual birth!
Thou wonderest how the world contained them all!
Thy wonder stay: like men, this was their doom:—
That dust they were, and should to dust return.
And oft their fathers, childless and bereaved,
Wept o'er their graves, when they themselves were green.
And on them fell, as fell on every age,
As on their authors fell, oblivious Night,
Which o'er the past lay darkling, heavy, still
Impenetrable, motionless, and sad,
Having his dismal leaden plumage, stirred
By no remembrancer, to show the men
Who after came what was concealed beneath.

The story telling tribe, alone, outran
All calculation far, and left behind,
Lagging, the swiftest numbers: dreadful, even
To fancy, was their never-ceasing birth;
And room had lacked, had not their life been short
Excepting some—their definition take
Thou thus, exprest in gentle phrase, which leaves
Some truth behind: A Novel was a book
Three-volumed, and once read, and oft crammed full

Digitized by Google

Of poisonous error, blackening every page;
And oftener still of trifling, second-hand
Remark, and old, diseased, putrid thought;
And miserable incident, at war
With nature, with itself and truth at war:
Yet charming still the greedy reader on,
Till, done, he tried to recollect his thoughts,
And nothing found but dreaming emptiness.
These, like ephemera, sprung in a day,
From lean and shallow soiled brains of sand,
And in a day expired: yet while they lived,
Tremendous oftimes was the popular roar;
And cries of—Live for ever!—struck the skies.

One kind alone remained, seen thro' the gloom
And sullen shadow of the past; as lights
At intervals they shone, and brought the eye,
That backward travelled, upward, till arrived
At him, who, on the hills of Midian, sang
The patient man of Uz; and from the lyre
Of angels, learned the early dawn of Time.
Not light and momentary labour these,
But discipline and self-denial long,
And purpose staunch, and perseverance, asked,
And energy that inspiration seemed.
Composed of many thoughts, possessing, each,
Innate and underived vitality:
Which having fitly shaped, and well arranged
In brotherly accord, they builded up
A stately superstructure, that, nor wind,
Nor wave, nor shock of falling years could move;
Majestic and indissolubly firm,
As ranks of veteran warriors in the field;
Each, by himself alone, and singly seen—
A tower of strength; in massy phalanx knit,
And in embattled squadron rushing on—
A sea of valour, dread! invincible!

Books of this sort, or sacred, or profane,
Which virtue helped, were titled not amiss,
The medicine of the mind: who read them, read
Wisdom, and was refreshed; and on his path
Of pilgrimage with healthier step advanced.

In mind, in matter, much was difficult
To understand: but what in deepest night
Retired, inscrutable, mysterious, dark,
Was evil; God's decrees; and deeds decreed,
Responsible. Why God, the just, the good,
Omnipotent and wise, should suffer sin
To rise. Why man was free, accountable;
Yet God foreseeing, overruling all.
Where'er the eye could turn, whatever tract
Of moral thought it took, by reason's torch,
Or Scripture's led, before it still this mount
Sprung up, impervious, insurmountable,
Above the human stature rising far;
Horizon of the mind—surrounding still
The vision of the soul with clouds and gloom.
Yet did they oft attempt to scale its sides,
And gain its top. Philosophy, to climb,
With all her vigour toiled from age to age;
From age to age, Theology, with all
Her vigour, toiled; and vagrant Fancy toiled.
Not weak and foolish only, but the wise,
Patient, courageous, stout, sound-headed man,
Of proper discipline, of excellent wind,
And strong of intellectual limb, toiled hard;
And oft above the reach of common eye
Ascended far, and seemed well nigh the top:
But only seemed; for still another top
Above them rose, till giddy grown, and mad,
With gazing at these dangerous heights of God
They tumbled down, and in their raving said,
They o'er the summit saw: and some believed
Believed a lie; for never man on earth,
That mountain crossed, or saw its farther side.
Around it lay the wreck of many a Sage—
Divine—Philosopher; and many more
Fell daily, undeterred by millions fallen;
Each wondering why he failed to comprehend
God, and with finite measure infinite.
To pass it, was no doubt desirable;
And few of any intellectual size,
That did not sometime in their day attempt;
But all in vain; for as the distant hill,
Which on the right, or left, the traveller's eye
Bounds, seems advancing as he walks, and oft
He looks, and looks, and thinks to pass; but still
It forward moves, and mocks his baffled sight,
Till night descends and wraps the scene in gloom:
So did this moral height the vision mock;
So lifted up its dark and cloudy head,
Before the eye, and met it evermore.
And some, provoked, accused the righteous God.
Accused of what? hear human boldness now;
Hear guilt, hear folly, madness, all extreme!
Accused of what? the God of truth accused
Of cruelty, injustice, wickedness!
Abundant sin! Because a mortal man,
A worm at best of small capacity,
With scarce an atom of Jehovah's works
Before him, and with scarce an hour to look
Upon them, should presume to censure God—
The infinite and uncreated God!
To sit in judgment—on Himself, his works,
His providence! and try, accuse, condemn!
If there is aught, thought or to think, absurd,
Irrational, and wicked, this is more—
This most; the sin of devils, or of those
To devils growing fast; wise men and good,
Accused themselves, not God; and put their hands
Upon their mouths and in the dust adored.

The Christian's faith had many mysteries too.
The uncreated holy Three in One;
Divine incarnate; human in divine;
The inward call; the Sanctifying Dew
Coming unseen, unseen departing thence;
Anew creating all, and yet not heard;
Compelling, yet not felt:—mysterious these;
Not that Jehovah to conceal them wished;
Not that religion wished. The Christian faith,
Unlike the timorous creeds of pagan priest
Was frank, stood forth to view, invited all
To prove, examine, search, investigate,
And gave herself a light to see her by.
Mysterious these—because too large for eye
Of man, too long for human arm to mete.

Go to yon mount, which on the north side stands
Of New Jerusalem, and lifts her head
Serene in glory bright, except the hill,
The Sacred Hill of God, whereon no foot
Must tread, highest of all creation's walks,

Digitized by Google

And overlooking all, in prospect vast,
From out the ethereal blue—that cliff ascend;
Gaze thence; around thee look; nought now impedes
Thy view: yet still thy vision, purified
And strong although it be, a boundary meets.
Or rather thou wilt say, thy vision fails
To gaze throughout illimitable space,
And find the end of infinite: and so
It was with all the mysteries of faith;
God sent them forth unveiled to the full gaze
Of man, and asked him to investigate;
But reason's eye, however purified,
And on whatever tall, and goodly height
Of observation placed, to comprehend
Them fully, sought in vain. In vain seeks still;
But wiser now and humbler, she concludes
From what she knows already of his love,
All gracious, that she cannot understand;
And gives him credit, reverence, praise for all.

Another feature in the ways of God,
That wondrous seemed, and made some men complain,
Was the unequal gift of worldly things.
Great was the difference, indeed, of men
Externally, from beggar to the prince.
The highest take, and lowest—and conceive
The scale between. A noble of the earth,
One of its great, in splendid mansion dwelt;
Was robed in silk and gold; and every day
Fared sumptuously; was titled, honoured, served.
Thousands his nod awaited, and his will
For law received: whole provinces his march
Attended, and his chariot drew, or on
Their shoulders bore aloft the precious man.
Millions, abased, fell prostrate at his feet;
And millions more thundered adoring praise.
As far as eye could reach, he called the land
His own, and added yearly to his fields.
Like tree that of the soil took healthy root,
He grew on every side, and towered on high,
And over half a nation shadowing wide,
He spread his ample boughs; air, earth, and sea,
Nature entire, the brute, and rational,
To please him ministered, and vied among
Themselves, who most should his desires prevent,
Watching the moving of his rising thoughts
Attentively, and hasting to fulfil.
His palace rose and kissed the gorgeous clouds;
Streams bent their music to his will; trees sprung;
The naked waste put on luxuriant robes;
And plains of happy cottagee cast out
Their tenants, and became a hunting-field.
Before him bowed the distant isles, with fruits
And spices rare; the south her treasures brought;
The east and west sent; and the frigid north
Came with her offering of glossy furs.
Musicians soothed his ears with airs select;
Beauty held out her arms; and every man
Of cunning skill, and curious device,
And endless multitudes of liveried wights,
His pleasure waited with obsequious look.
And when the wants of nature were supplied,
And common-place extravagances filled,
Beyond their asking; and caprice itself,
In all its zig-zag appetites, gorged full,
The man new wants, and new expenses planned:
Nor planned alone: wise, learned, sober men,
Of cogitation deep, took up his case,
And planned for him new modes of folly wild;
Contrived new wishes, wants, and wondrous means
Of spending with despatch: yet after all,
His fields extended still, his riches grew,
And what seemed splendour infinite, increased.
So lavishly upon a single man
Did Providence his bounties daily shower.

Turn now thy eye, and look on poverty!
Look on the lowest of her ragged sons!
We find him by the way, sitting in dust;
He has no bread to eat, no tongue to ask;
No limbs to walk; no home, no house, no friend
Observe his goblin cheek; his wretched eye;
See how his hand, if any hand he has,
Involuntarily opens, and trembles forth,
As comes the traveller's foot; and hear his groan
His long and lamentable groan, announce
The want that gnaws within; severely now,
The sun scorches and burns his old bald head;
The frost now glues him to the chilly earth;
On him hail, rain, and tempest, rudely beat;
And all the winds of heaven, in jocular mood,
Sport with his withered rags, that, tossed about,
Display his nakedness to passers by,
And grievously burlesque the human form.
Observe him yet more narrowly: his limbs,
With palsy shaken, about him blasted lie;
And all his flesh is full of putrid sores,
And noisome wounds, his bones of racking pains
Strange vesture this for an immortal soul!
Strange retinue to wait a lord of earth!
It seems as Nature, in some surly mood,
After debate and musing long, had tried,
How vile and miserable thing her hand
Could fabricate, then made this meagre man:
A sight so full of perfect misery,
That passengers their faces turned away,
And hasted to be gone; and delicate
And tender women took another path.

This great disparity of outward things
Taught many lessons; but this taught in chief,
Though learned by few; that God no value set,
That man should none, on goods of worldly kind
On transitory, frail, external things,
Of migratory, ever-changing sort.
And farther taught, that in the soul alone,
The thinking, reasonable, willing soul,
God placed the total excellence of man;
And meant him evermore to seek it there.

But stranger still the distribution seemed
Of intellect; though fewer here complained;
Each with his share, upon the whole, content.
One man there was—and many such you might
Have met—who never had a dozen thoughts
In all his life, and never changed their course;
But told them o'er, each in its 'customed place,
From morn till night, from youth till hoary age.
Little above the ox which grazed the field
His reason rose: so weak his memory,
The name his mother called him by, he scarce
Remembered; and his judgment so untaught,
That what at evening played along the swamp.

Digitized by Google

Fantastic, clad in robe of fiery hue,
He thought the devil in disguise, and fled
With quivering heart, and winged footsteps home.
The word philosophy he never heard,
Or science; never heard of liberty,
Necessity, or laws of gravitation:
And never had an unbelieving doubt.
Beyond his native vale he never looked;
But thought the visual line, that girt him round,
The world's extreme: and thought the silver moon,
That nightly o'er him led her virgin host,
No broader than his father's shield. He lived—
Lived where his father lived—died where he died;
Lived happy, and died happy, and was saved.
Be not surprised. He loved, and served his God.

There was another, large of understanding,
Of memory infinite, of judgment deep:
Who knew all learning, and all science knew;
And all phenomena, in heaven and earth,
Traced to their causes; traced the labyrinths
Of thought, association, passion, will;
And all the subtile, nice affinities
Of matter, traced; its virtues, motions, laws;
And most familiarly and deeply talked
Of mental, moral, natural, divine.
Leaving the earth at will, he soared to heaven,
And read the glorious visions of the skies;
And to the music of the rolling spheres
Intelligently listened; and gazed far back
Into the awful depths of Deity;
Did all that mind assisted most could do;
And yet in misery lived, in misery died,
Because he wanted holiness of heart.

A deeper lesson this to mortals taught,
And nearer cut the branches of their pride:
That not in mental, but in moral worth,
God excellence placed; and only to the good,
To virtue, granted happiness alone.

Admire the goodness of Almighty God!
He riches gave, he intellectual strength
To few, and therefore none commands to be
Or rich, or learned; nor promises reward
Of peace to these. On all, He moral worth
Bestowed; and moral tribute asked from all.
And who that could not pay? who born so poor,
Of intellect so mean, as not to know
What seemed the best; and, knowing, might not do?
As not to know what God and conscience bade?
And what they bade, not able to obey?
And he who acted thus fulfilled the law
Eternal, and its promise reaped of peace:
Found peace this way alone: who sought it else,
Sought mellow grapes beneath the ice pole;
Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death;
Sought substance in a world of fleeting shades.
Take one example—to our purpose quite.
A man of rank, and of capacious soul;
Who riches had, and fame beyond desire:
An heir of flattery, to titles born,
And reputation, and luxurious life.
Yet not content with ancestorial name;
Or to be known, because his fathers were:
He on this height hereditary stood,
And gazing higher, purposed in his heart
To take another step. Above him seemed
Alone the mount of Song—the lofty seat
Of canonized bards; and thitherward,
By nature taught, and inward melody,
In prime of youth, he bent his eagle eye.
No cost was spared. What books he wished, he read:
What sage to hear, heard: what scenes to see,
He saw. And first in rambling school-boy days,
Britannia's mountain walks, and heath-girt lakes,
And story-telling glens, and founts, and brooks,
And maids, as dew-drops pure and fair, his soul
With grandeur filled, and melody, and love.
Then travel came, and took him where he wished.
He cities saw, and courts, and princely pomp;
And mused alone on ancient mountain brows;
And mused on battle-fields, where valour fought
In other days; and mused on ruins gray
With years: and drank from old and fabulous wells;
And plucked the vine that first-born prophets plucked;
And mused on famous tombs; and on the wave
Of ocean mused; and on the desert waste.
The heavens and earth of every country saw
Where'er the old inspiring Genii dwelt,
Aught that could rouse, expand, refine the soul,
Thither he went, and meditated there.

He touched his harp, and nations heard, entranced.
As some vast river of unfailing source,
Rapid, exhaustless, deep, his numbers flowed,
And opened new fountains in the human heart.
Where fancy halted, weary in her flight,
In other men, his, fresh as morning rose,
And soared untrodden heights, and seemed at home
Where angels bashful looked. Others, though great,
Beneath their argument seemed struggling; whiles
He from above descending, stooped to touch
The loftiest thought; and proudly stooped, as though
It scarce deserved his verse. With Nature's self
He seemed an old acquaintance, free to jest
At will with all her glorious majesty.
He laid his hand upon "the Ocean's mane,"
And played familiar with his hoary locks.
Stood on the Alps, stood on the Apennines,
And with the thunder talked, as friend to friend;
And wove his garland of the lightning's wing,
In sportive twist—the lightning's fiery wing,
Which, as the footsteps of the dreadful God,
Marching upon the storm in vengeance, seemed:
Then turned, and with the grasshopper, who sung
His evening song, beneath his feet, conversed.
Suns, moons, and stars, and clouds his sisters were;
Rocks, mountains, meteors, seas, and winds, and storms,
His brothers—younger brothers, whom he scarce
As equals deemed. All passions of all men—
The wild and tame—the gentle and severe;
All thoughts, all maxims, sacred and profane;
All creeds; all seasons, Time, Eternity;

Digitized by Google

All that was hated, and all that was dear;
All that was hoped, all that was feared by man,
He tossed about, as tempest-withered leaves,
Then, smiling, looked upon the wreck he made.
With terror now he froze the cowering blood,
And now dissolved the heart in tenderness;
Yet would not tremble, would not weep himself:
But back into his soul retired, alone,
Dark, sullen, proud: gazing contemptuously
On hearts and passions prostrate at his feet.
So Ocean, from the plains his waves had late
To desolation swept, retired in pride,
Exulting in the glory of his might,
And seemed to mock the ruin he had wrought.

As some fierce comet of tremendous size,
To which the stars did reverence, as it passed;
So he through learning, and through fancy took
His flight sublime; and on the loftiest top
Of Fame's dread mountain sat: not soiled, and worn,
As if he from the earth had laboured up;
But as some bird of heavenly plumage fair,
He looked, which down from higher regions came,
And perched it there, to see what lay beneath.

The nations gazed, and wondered much, and praised:
Critics before him fell in humble plight;
Confounded fell; and made debasing signs
To catch his eye; and stretched, and swelled themselves
To bursting nigh, to utter bulky words
Of admiration vast: and many too,
Many that aimed to imitate his flight,
With weaker wing, unearthly fluttering made,
And gave abundant sport to after days.

Great man! the nations gazed, and wondered much,
And praised: and many called his evil good.
Wits wrote in favour of his wickedness:
And kings to do him honour took delight.
Thus full of titles, flattery, honour, fame;
Beyond desire, beyond ambition full,
He died.—He died of what? Of wretchedness.
Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
Of fame; drank early, deeply drank; drank draughts
That common millions might have quenched—then died
Of thirst, because there was no more to drink.
His goddess, Nature, wooed, embraced, enjoyed,
Fell from his arms, abhorred; his passions died;
Died all but dreary, solitary pride;
And all his sympathies in being died.
As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,
Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
And then retiring, left it there to rot
And moulder in the winds and rains of heaven:
So he, cut from the sympathies of life,
And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge—
A wandering, weary, worn, and wretched thing;
Scorched, and desolate, and blasted soul;
A gloomy wilderness of dying thought—
Repined, and groaned, and withered from the earth.
His groanings filled the land his numbers filled;
And yet he seemed ashamed to groan. Poor man
Ashamed to ask, and yet he needed help.

Proof this, beyond all lingering of doubt,
That not with natural or mental wealth,
Was God delighted, or his peace secured:
That not in natural or mental wealth,
Was human happiness or grandeur found.
Attempt how monstrous! and how surely vain!
With things of earthly sort, with aught but God
With aught but moral excellence, truth and love,
To satisfy and fill the immortal soul!
Attempt, vain inconceivably! attempt,
To satisfy the ocean with a drop;
To marry Immortality to Death;
And with the unsubstantial Shade of Time,
To fill the embrace of all Eternity!

BOOK V.

ANALYSIS.

Actions done in Time live in Eternity.
Men may be absolved from the consequence of sin, but the evil deed, although not imputed, remains a dark spot on the annals of the past.
True happiness was within the reach of all; and that, which was joy to one, was misery to another.
True happiness always accompanied duty.
Among the contributions to happiness were, the bliss and joys of childhood, of maternal affection, of youthful love, and of friendship; the study of nature; recollections of the past; anticipations of the future, repose after labour, and even grief afforded joys.
From whatever sources men experienced joy, the pious enjoyed the same in the highest degree.
Of the Millennium, the thousand years of Messiah's reign, foretold by the prophets, preceded by the conflict between Truth and Error.

Praise God, ye servants of the Lord! praise God,
Ye angels strong! praise God, ye sons of men!
Praise him who made, and who redeemed your souls;
Who gave you hope, reflection, reason, will;
Minds that can pierce eternity remote,
And live at once on future, present, past;
Can speculate on systems yet to make,
And back recoil on ancient days of Time.
Of Time, soon past; soon lost among the shades
Of buried years. Not so the actions done
In Time; the deeds of reasonable men;
As if engraven with pen of iron grain,
And laid in flinty rock, they stand unchanged,
Written on the various pages of the past:
If good, in rosy characters of love;
If bad, in letters of vindictive fire.

Digitized by Google

God may forgive, but cannot blot them out.
Systems begin, and end; eternity
Rolls on his endless years; and men absolved
By mercy from the consequence, forget
The evil deed; and God imputes it not:
But neither systems ending nor begun,
Eternity that rolls his endless years,
Nor men absolved, and sanctified, and washed
By mercy from the consequence; nor yet
Forgetfulness; nor God imputing not,
Can wash the guilty deed once done, from out
The faithful annals of the past; who reads,
And many read, there finds it, as it was,
And is, and shall for ever be—a dark,
Unnatural and loathly moral spot.

The span of Time was short indeed; and now
Three-fourths were past, the last begun, and on
Careering to its close; which soon we sing:
But first our promise we redeem, to tell
The joys of Time—her joys of native growth;
And briefly must, what longer tale deserves.

Wake, dear remembrances! wake, childhood-days!
Loves, friendships, wake! and wake, thou morn and even!
Sun! with thy orient locks; night, moon, and stars!
And thou, celestial bow! and all ye woods,
And hills, and vales; first trod in dawning life!
And hours of holy musing, wake! wake, earth,
And, smiling to remembrance, come; and bring,
For thou canst bring, meet argument for song
Of heavenly harp; meet hearing for the ear
Of heavenly auditor, exalted high.

God gave much peace on earth, much holy joy:
Oped fountains of perennial spring, whence flowed
Abundant happiness to all who wished
To drink: not perfect bliss; that dwells with us,
Beneath the eyelids of the Eternal One,
And sits at his right hand alone: but such,
As well deserved the name—abundant joy.
Pleasures, on which the memory of saints
Of highest glory, still delights to dwell.

It was, we own, subject of much debate,
And worthy men stood on opposing sides,
Whether the cup of mortal life had more
Of sour or sweet. Vain question this, when asked
In general terms, and worthy to be left
Unsolved. If most was sour—the drinker, not
The cup, we blame. Each in himself the means
Possessed to turn the bitter sweet, the sweet
To bitter; hence from out the self-same fount,
One nectar drank, another draughts of gall.
Hence from the self-same quarter of the sky,
One saw ten thousand angels look, and smile;
Another saw as many demons frown.
One discord heard, where harmony inclined
Another's ear. The sweet was in the taste;
The beauty in the eye; and in the ear
The melody; and in the man—for God
Necessity of sinning laid on none—
To form the taste, to purify the eye,
And tune the ear, that all he tasted, saw,
Or heard, might be harmonious, sweet and fair.
Who would might groan: who would, might sing for joy.

Nature lamented little; undevoured
By spurious appetites, she found enough,
Where least was found: with gleanings satisfied,
Or crumbs, that from the hand of luxury fell;
Yet seldom these she ate; but ate the bread
Of her own industry, made sweet by toil:
And walked in robes that her own hand had spun:
And slept on down, her early rising bought.
Frugal, and diligent in business, chaste
And abstinent, she stored for helpless age;
And keeping in reserve her spring-day health,
And dawning relishes of life, she drank
Her evening cup with excellent appetite;
And saw her eldest sun decline, as fair
As rose her earliest morn, and pleased as well.

Whether in crowds or solitudes—in streets
Or shady groves dwelt Happiness, it seems
In vain to ask; her nature makes it vain:
Though poets much, and hermits, talked and sung
Of brooks, and crystal founts, and weeping dews,
And myrtle bowers, and solitary vales;
And with the nymph made assignations there,
And wooed her with the love-sick oaten reed;
And sages too, although less positive,
Advised their sons to court her in the shade—
Delirious babble all! Was happiness,
Was self-approving, God approving joy,
In drops of dew, however pure? in gales,
However sweet? in wells, however clear?
Or groves, however thick with verdant shade?

True, these were of themselves exceeding fair:
How fair at morn and even! worthy the walk
Of loftiest mind; and gave, when all within
Was right, a feast of overflowing bliss.
But were the occasion, not the cause of joy:
They waked the native fountains of the soul,
Which slept before; and stirred the holy tides
Of feeling up; giving the heart to drink
From its own treasures, draughts of perfect sweet.

The Christian faith, which better knew the heart
Of man, him thither sent for peace; and thus
Declares: Who finds it, let him find it there:
Who finds it not, for ever let him seek
In vain: 'tis God's most holy, changeless will.

True happiness had no localities;
No tones provincial; no peculiar garb.
Where duty went, she went; with justice went;
And went with meekness, charity, and love.
Where'er a tear was dried; a wounded heart
Bound up; a bruised spirit with the dew
Of sympathy annointed; or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed; or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven;
Where'er an evil passion was subdued,
Or Virtue's feeble embers fanned; where'er
A sin was heartily abjured, and left;
Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed
A pious prayer, or wished a pious wish—
There was a high and holy place, a spot

Digitized by Google

Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.

But these apart. In sacred memory lives
The morn of life; first morn of endless days.
Most joyful morn! nor yet for nought the joy:
A being of eternal date commenced;
A young immortal then was born; and who
Shall tell what strange variety of bliss
Burst on the infant soul, when first it looked
Abroad on God's creation fair, and saw
The glorious earth, and glorious heaven, and face
Of man sublime? and saw all new, and felt
All new? when thought awoke; thought never more
To sleep? when first it saw, heard, reasoned, willed;
And triumphed in the warmth of conscious life?—
Nor happy only; but the cause of joy,
Which those who never tasted always mourned.
What tongue?—no tongue shall tell what bliss o'erflowed
The mother's tender heart, while round her hung
The offspring of her love, and lisped her name;
As living jewels dropt unstained from heaven,
That made her fairer far, and sweeter seem,
Than every ornament of costliest hue.
And who hath not been ravished, as she passed
With all her playful band of little ones,
Like Luna, with her daughters of the sky,
Walking in matron majesty and grace?
All who had hearts, here pleasure found: and oft
Have I, when tired with heavy task, for tasks
Were heavy in the world below, relaxed
My weary thoughts among their guiltless sports;
And led them by their little hands afield;
And watched them run and crop the tempting flower,—
Which oft, unasked, they brought me and bestow'd
With smiling face, that waited for a look
Of praise—and answered curious questions, put
In much simplicity, but ill to solve;
And heard their observations strange and new,
And settled whiles their little quarrels, soon
Ending in peace, and soon forgot in love.
And still I looked upon their loveliness;
And sought through nature for similitudes
Of perfect beauty, innocence, and bliss.
And fairest imagery round me thronged:—
Dew-drops at day-spring on a seraph's locks;
Roses that oathe about the well of life;
Young loves, young hopes, dancing on Morning's cheek;
Gems leaping in the coronet of love:
So beautiful, so full of life, they seemed
As made entire of beams of angels' eyes.
Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely, little things!
Playing around the den of Sorrow, clad
In smiles; believing in their fairy hopes;
And thinking man and woman true! all joy:
Happy all day, and happy all the night.

Hail, holy love! thou word that sums all bliss.
Gives and receives all bliss; fullest when most
Thou givest. Spring-head of all felicity!
Deepest when most is drawn. Emblem of God!
O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink.
Essence that binds the uncreated Three:
Chain that unites creation to its Lord:
Centre to which all being gravitates.
Eternal, ever-growing, happy love!
Enduring all, hoping, forgiving all;
Instead of law, fulfilling every law:
Entirely blest, because thou seekest no more;
Hopes not, nor fears; but on the present lives,
And holds perfection smiling in thy arms.
Mysterious, infinite, exhaustless love!
On earth mysterious, and mysterious still
In heaven; sweet chord, that harmonizes all
The harps of Paradise; the spring, the well,
That fills the bowl, and banquet of the sky.

But why should I to thee of love divine?
Who happy, and not eloquent of love?
Who holy, and as thou art, pure, and not
A temple where her glory ever dwells,
Where burns her fires, and beams her perfect eye?

Kindred to this, part of this holy flame,
Was youthful love—the sweetest boon of Earth.
Hail love! first love, thou word that sums all bliss!
The sparkling cream of all Time's blessedness:
The silken down of happiness complete:
Discerner of the ripest grapes of joy,
She gathered, and selected with her hand,
All finest relishes, all fairest sights;
All rarest odours, all divinest sounds;
All thoughts, all feelings dearest to the soul;
And brought the holy mixture home, and filled
The heart with all superlatives of bliss.
But who would that expound which words transcends,
Must talk in vain.—Behold a meeting scene
Of earthly love, and thence infer its worth.

It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood;
The corn-fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand;
And all the winds slept soundly: nature seemed
In silent contemplation, to adore
Its Maker: now and then the aged leaf
Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground;
And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly Thought
Conversing with itself: Vesper looked forth
From out her western hermitage, and smiled;
And up the east, unclouded, rode the Moon
With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there.

Such was the night—so lovely, still, serene;
When, by a hermit thorn that on the hill
Had seen a hundred flowery ages pass,
A damsel kneeled to offer up her prayer:
Her prayer nightly offered, nightly heard.
This ancient thorn had been the meeting place
Of love, before his country's voice had called
The ardent youth, to fields of honour, far
Beyond the wave. And hither now repaired,
Nightly, the maid; by God's all-seeing eye
Seen only, while sought this boon alone:
"Her lover's safety, and his quick return."

Digitized by Google

In holy, humble attitude she kneeled:
And to her bosom, fair as moon-beam, pressed
One hand, the other lifted up to heaven;
Her eye, upturned, bright as the star of morn,
As violet meek, excessive ardour streamed,
Wafting away her earnest heart to God.
Her voice, scarce uttered, soft as zephyr sighs
On morning lily's cheek; though soft and low—
Yet heard in heaven, heard at the mercy-seat.
A tear-drop wandered on her lovely face;
It was a tear of faith, and holy fear,
Pure as the drops that hang at dawning-time,
On yonder willows by the stream of life.
On her the moon looked steadfastly; the stars,
That circle nightly round the eternal throne,
Glanced down, well pleased; and everlasting Love
Gave gracious audience to her prayer sincere.

O, had her lover seen her thus alone,
Thus holy, wrestling thus, and all for him!
Nor did he not; for oftimes Providence,
With unexpected joy the fervent prayer
Of faith surprised:—returned from long delay
With glory crowned of righteous actions won,
The sacred thorn to memory dear, first sought
The youth, and found it at the happy hour,
Just when the damsel kneeled herself to pray.
Wrapt in devotion, pleading with her God,
She saw him not, heard not his foot approach.
All holy images seemed too impure
To emblem her he saw. A seraph kneeled,
Beseeching for his ward, before the throne,
Seemed fittest, pleased him best. Sweet was the thought;
But sweeter still the kind remembrance came,
That she was flesh, and blood, formed for himself,
The plighted partner of his future life.
And as they met, embraced, and sat embowered
In woody chambers of the starry night,—
Spirits of love about them ministered,
And God, approving, blessed the holy joy.

Nor unremembered is the hour when friends
Met, friends but few on earth, and therefore dear:
Sought oft, and sought almost as oft in vain:
Yet always sought; so native to the heart,
So much desired, and coveted by all.
Nor wonder thou—thou wonderest not, nor needst:
Much beautiful, and excellent, and fair
Was seen beneath the sun: but nought was seen
More beautiful, or excellent, or fair
Than face of faithful friend; fairest when seen
In darkest day. And many sounds were sweet,
Most ravishing, and pleasant to the ear;
But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend;
Sweet always, sweetest heard in loudest storm.
Some I remember, and will ne'er forget;
My early friends, friends of my evil day;
Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too;
Friends given by God in mercy and in love;
My counsellors, my comforters, and guides;
My joy in grief, my second bliss in joy;
Companions of my young desires; in doubt
My oracles; my wings in high pursuit.
O, I remember, and will ne'er forget,
Our meeting spots, our chosen sacred hours;
Our burning words, that uttered all the soul;
Our faces beaming with unearthly love;—
Sorrow with sorrow sighing, hope with hope
Exulting, heart embracing heart entire.
As birds of social feather, helping each
His fellow's flight, we soared into the skies,
And cast the clouds beneath our feet, and Earth,
With all her tardy leaden-footed cares,
And talked the speech, and ate the food of heaven.
These I remember, these selectest men;
And would their names record—but what avails
My mention of their name: before the throne
They stand, illustrious, 'mong the loudest harps,
And will receive thee glad, my friend and theirs.
For all are friends in heaven; all faithful friends;
And many friendships in the days of Time
Begun, are lasting here, and growing still;
So grows ours evermore, both theirs and mine.

Nor is the hour of lonely walk forgot,
In the wide desert, where the view was large.
Pleasant were many scenes, but most to me
The solitude of vast extent, untouched
By hand of art; where nature sowed, herself,
And reaped her crops;—whose garments were the clouds;
Whose minstrels, brooks; whose lamps, the moon and stars;
Whose organ-quire, the voice of many waters;
Whose banquets, morning dews; whose heroes, storms;
Whose warriors, mighty winds; whose lovers, flowers;
Whose orators, the thunderbolts of God,
Whose palaces, the everlasting hills;
Whose ceiling, heaven's unfathomable blue:
And from whose rocky turrets battled high,
Prospect immense spread out on all sides round;
Lost now between the welkin and the main—
Now walled with hills that slept above the storm.

Most fit was such a place for musing men;
Happiest sometimes when musing without aim.
It was indeed a wondrous sort of bliss
The lonely bard enjoyed, when forth he walked
Unpurposed; stood, and knew not why; sat down,
And knew not where; arose, and knew not when;
Had eyes, and saw not; ears, and nothing heard;
And sought—sought neither heaven nor earth—sought nought,
Nor meant to think; but ran, meantime, through vast
Of visionary things, fairer than aught
That was; and saw the distant tops of thoughts,
Which men of common stature never saw,
Greater than aught that largest words could hold,
Or give idea of, to those who read.
He entered in to Nature's holy place,
Her inner chamber, and beheld her face
Unveiled; and heard unutterable things,
And incommunicable visions saw:—
Things then unutterable, and visions then
Of incommunicable glory bright;
But by the lips of after ages formed
To words, or by their pencil pictured forth:
Who entering farther in beheld again,
And heard unspeakable and marvellous things,

Digitized by Google

Which other ages in their turn revealed;
And left to others, greater wonders still.

The earth abounded much in silent wastes;
Nor yet is heaven without its solitudes,
Else incomplete in bliss, whither who will
May oft retire, and meditate alone,
Of God, redemption, holiness, and love:
Nor needs to fear a setting sun, or haste
Him home from rainy tempest unforeseen;
Or, sighing, leave his thoughts for want of time.

But whatsoever was both good and fair,
And highest relish of enjoyment gave,
In intellectual exercise was found;
When, gazing through the future, present, past,
Insured, thought linked to thought, harmonious flowed
In poetry—the loftiest mood of mind.
Or when philosophy the reason led
Deep through the outward circumstance of things,
And saw the master wheels of Nature move;
And travelled far along the endless line
Of certain, and of probable; and made,
At every step, some new discovery,
That gave the soul sweet sense of larger room—
High these pursuits—and sooner to be named
Deserved; at present only named: again
To be resumed, and praised in longer verse.

Abundant, and diversified above
All number, were the sources of delight;
As infinite as were the lips that drank:
And to the pure, all innocent and pure;
The simplest still to wisest men the best.
One made acquaintanceship with plants and flowers,
And happy grew in telling all their names.
One classed the quadrupeds; a third the fowls;
Another found in minerals his joy.
And I have seen a man, a worthy man,
In happy mood conversing with a fly;
And as he through his glass, made by himself,
Beheld its wondrous eye, and plumage fine,
From leaping scarce he kept for perfect joy.

And from my path, I with my friend have turned,
A man of excellent mind, and excellent heart,
And climbed the neighbouring hill, with arduous step,
Fetching from distant cairn, or from the earth,
Digging, with labour sore, the ponderous stone,
Which, having carried to the highest top,
We downward rolled; and as it strove at first
With obstacles that seemed to match its force,
With feeble crooked motion to and fro
Wavering, he looked with interest most intense,
And prayer almost; and as it gathered strength,
And straightened the current of its furious flow—
Exulting in the swiftness of its course,
And, rising now with rainbow-bound immense,
Leaped down, careering o'er the subject plain,
He clapped his hands in sign of boundless bliss;
And laughed and talked, well paid for all his toil:
And when at night the story was rehearsed,
Uncommon glory kindled in his eye.

And there were too—harp! lift thy voice on high,
And run in rapid numbers o'er the face
Of Nature's scenery—and there were day
And night; and rising suns, and setting suns;
And clouds, that seemed like chariots of saints,
By fiery coursers drawn—as brightly hued,
As if the glorious, bushy, golden locks
Of thousand cherubim had been shorn off,
And on the temples hung of morn and even.
And there were moons, and stars, and darkness streaked
With light; and voice of tempest heard secure.
And there were seasons coming evermore,
And going still, all fair, and always new,
With bloom, and fruit, and fields of hoary grain.
And there were hills of flock, and groves of song;
And flowery streams, and garden walks embowered,
Where side by side the rose and lily bloomed.
And sacred founts, wild harps, and moonligh glens;
And forests vast, fair lawns, and lonely oaks;
And little willows sipping at the brook;
Old wizard haunts, and dancing seats of mirth;
Gay festive bowers, and palaces in dust;
Dark owlet nooks, and caves, and battled rocks;
And winding valleys, roofed with pendant shade;
And tall, and perilous cliffs, that overlooked
The breath of ocean, sleeping on his waves.
Sounds, sights, smells, tastes; the heaven and earth, profuse
In endless sweets, above all praise of song:
For not to use alone did Providence
Abound, but large example gave to man
Of grace, and ornament, and splendour rich;
Suited abundantly to every taste,
In bird, beast, fish, winged and creeping thing;
In herb and flower; and in the restless change,
Which on the many-coloured seasons made
The annual circuit of the fruitful earth.

Nor do I aught of earthly sort remember,—
If partial feeling to my native place
Lead not my lyre astray,—of fairer view,
And comelier walk, than the blue mountain-paths,
And snowy cliffs of Albion renowned;
Albion, an isle long blest with gracious laws,
And gracious kings, and favoured much of Heaven;
Though yielding oft penurious gratitude.
Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful,
Than Scotia's northern battlement of hills,
Which first I from my father's house beheld,
At dawn of life: beloved in memory still;
And standard still of rural imagery:
What most resembles them, the fairest seems,
And stirs the eldest sentiments of bliss;
And pictured on the tablet of my heart,
Their distant shapes eternally remain,
And in my dreams their cloudy tops arise.
Much of my native scenery appears,
And presses forward to be in my song;
But must not now; for much behind awaits
Of higher note. Four trees I pass not by,
Which o'er our house their evening shadow threw,—

Digitized by Google

Three ash, and one of elm: tall trees they were,
And old: and had been old a century
Before my day: none living could say aught
About their youth; but they were goodly trees:
And oft I wondered, as I sat and thought
Beneath their summer shade, or in the night
Of winter heard the spirits of the wind
Growling among their boughs,—how they had grown
So high, in such a rough tempestuous place:
And when a hapless branch, torn by the blast,
Fell down, I mourned, as if a friend had fallen.

These I distinctly hold in memory still,
And all the desert scenery around.
Nor strange, that recollection there should dwell,
Where first I heard of God's redeeming love;
First felt and reasoned, loved and was beloved,
And first awoke the harp to holy song.
To hoar and green there was enough of joy.
Hopes, friendships, charities, and warm pursuit,
Gave comfortable flow to youthful blood.
And there were old remembrances of days,
When on the glittering dews of orient life,
Shone sunshine hopes—unfailed, unperjured then:
And there were childish sports, and school-boy feats,
And school-boy spots, and earnest vows of love,
Uttered, when passion's boisterous tide ran high;
Sincerely uttered, though but seldom kept:
And there were angel looks; and sacred hours
Of rapture; hours that in a moment passed,
And yet were wished to last for evermore:
And venturous exploits; and hardy deeds;
And bargains shrewd, achieved in manhood's prime:
And thousand recollections, gay and sweet,
Which, as the old and venerable man
Approached the grave, around him, smiling, flocked,
And breathed new ardour through his ebbing veins;
And touched his lips with endless eloquence;
And cheered, and much refreshed his withered heart.
Indeed, each thing remembered, all but guilt,
Was pleasant, and a constant source of joy.
Nor lived the old on memory alone.
He in his children lived a second life;
With them again took root; sprang with their hopes;
Entered into their schemes; partook their fears;
Laughed in their mirth; and in their gain grew rich.
And sometimes on the eldest cheek was seen
A smile as hearty as on face of youth,
That saw in prospect sunny hopes invite,
Hope's pleasures—sung to harp of sweetest note;
Harp, heard with rapture on Britannia's hills;
With rapture heard by me, in morn of life.

Nor small the joy of rest to mortal men;
Rest after labour; sleep approaching soft,
And wrapping all the weary faculties
In sweet repose. Then Fancy, unrestrained
By sense or judgment, strange confusion made,
Of future, present, past; combining things
Unseemly, things unsociable in Nature,
In most absurd communion, laughable,
Though sometimes vexing sore the slumbering soul.
Sporting at will, she, through her airy halls,
With moonbeams paved, and canopied with stars,
And tapestried with marvellous imagery,
And shapes of glory, infinitely fair,
Moving and mixing in most wondrous dance—
Fantastically walked; but pleased so well,
That ill she liked the judgment's voice severe,
Which called her home when noisy morn awoke.
And oft she sprang beyond the bounds of Time,
On her swift pinion lifting up the souls
Of righteous men, on high, to God, and heaven,
Where they beheld unutterable things;
And heard the glorious music of the blest,
Circling the throne of the Eternal Three;
And with the spirits unincarnate, took
Celestial pastime, on the hills of God;
Forgetful of the gloomy pass between.

Some dreams were useless—moved by turbid course
Of animal disorder; not so all:
Deep moral lessons some impressed, that nought
Could afterwards deface. And oft in dreams,
The master passion of the soul displayed
His huge deformity, concealed by day—
Warning the sleeper to beware, awake.
And oft in dreams, the reprobate and vile,
Unpardonable sinner—as he seemed
Toppling upon the perilous edge of Hell—
In dreadful apparition, saw before
His vision pass, the shadows of the damned;
And saw the glare of hollow, cursed eyes,
Spring from the skirts of the infernal night;
And saw the souls of wicked men, new dead,
By devils hearsed into the fiery gulf;
And heard the burning of the endless flames;
And heard the weltering of the waves of wrath.
And sometimes, too, before his fancy passed
The Worm that never dies, writhing its folds
In hideous sort, and with eternal Death
Held horrid colloquy; giving the wretch
Unwelcome earnest of the woe to come.
But these we leave, as unbefitting song,
That promised happy narrative of joy.

But what of all the joys of earth was most
Of native growth, most proper to the soil—
Not elsewhere known, in worlds that never fell
Was joy that sprung from disappointed woe.
The joy in grief; the pleasure after pain;
Fears turned to hopes; meetings expected not;
Deliverances from dangerous attitudes;
Better for worse; and best sometimes for worst
And all the seeming ill, ending in good—
A sort of happiness composed, which none
Has had experience of, but mortal man.
Yet not to be despised. Look back, and one
Behold, who would not give her tear for all
The smiles that dance about the cheek of Mirth

Among the tombs she walks at noon of night
In miserable garb of widowhood.
Observe her yonder, sickly, pale, and sad,
Bending her wasted body o'er the grave
Of him who was the husband of her youth.

Digitized by Google

The moonbeams trembling through these ancient yews,
That stand like ranks of mourners round the bed
Of death, fall dismally upon her face;
Her little, hollow, withered face, almost
Invisible—so worn away with woe:
The tread of hasty foot, passing so late,
Disturbs her not; nor yet the roar of mirth,
From neighbouring revelry ascending loud.
She hears, sees nought; fears nought; one thought alone
Fills all her heart and soul; half hoping, half
Remembering, sad, unutterable thought!
Uttered by silence, and by tears alone.
Sweet tears! the awful language, eloquent
Of infinite affection; far too big
For words. She sheds not many now: that grass,
Which springs so rankly o'er the dead, has drunk
Already many showers of grief: a drop
Or two are all that now remain behind,
And from her eye, that darts strange fiery beams,
At dreary intervals, drip down her cheek,
Falling most mournfully from bone to bone.
But yet she wants not tears: that babe that hangs
Upon her breast, that babe that never saw
Its father—he was dead before its birth—
Helps her to weep, weeping before its time;
Taught sorrow by the mother's melting voice,
Repeating oft the father's sacred name.
Be not surprised at this expense of woe!
The man she mourns was all she called her own;
The music of her ear, light of her eye;
Desire of all her heart; her hope, her fear:
The element in which her passions lived—
Dead now, or dying all. Nor long shall she
Visit that place of skulls: night after night,
She wears herself away: the moonbeam now
That falls upon her unsubstantial frame,
Scarce finds obstruction; and upon her bones,
Barren as leafless boughs in winter-time,
Her infant fastens his little hands, as oft,
Forgetful, she leaves him awhile unheld.
But look, she passes not away in gloom:
A light from far illumes her face; a light
That comes beyond the moon, beyond the sun—
The light of truth divine; the glorious hope
Of resurrection at the promised morn,
And meetings then which ne'er shall part again.

Indulge another note of kindred tone,
Where grief was mixed with melancholy joy.

Our sighs were numerous, and profuse our tears;
For she was lost, was lovely, and we loved
Her much: fresh in our memory, as fresh
As yesterday, is yet the day she died.
It was an April day; and blithely all
The youth of nature leaped beneath the sun,
And promised glorious manhood; and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome blood,
In healthy merriment—when tidings came,
A child was born; and tidings came again,
That she who gave it birth was sick to death.
So swift trode sorrow on the heels of joy!
We gathered round her bed, and bent our knees
In fervent supplication to the Throne
Of Mercy, and perfumed our prayers with sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears, and looks
Of self-abasement; but we sought to stay
An angel on the earth; a spirit ripe
For heaven; and Mercy, in her love, refused:
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least!
Most gracious when she seemed the most to frown!
The room I well remember; and the bed
On which she lay; and all the faces too,
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there, and mother bending stood,
And down their aged cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness; her husband, too, was there,
And brothers; and they wept—her sisters, too,
Did weep and sorrow comfortless; and I,
Too, wept, though not to weeping given: and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad;
This I remember well; but better still,
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,
The dying eye—that eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew, as nearer death approached:
As I have seen the gentle little flower
Look fairest in the silver beam, which fell
Reflected from the thunder cloud that soon
Came down, and o'er the desert scattered far
And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
To bring her babe—'twas brought, and by her placed.
She looked upon its face, that neither smiled
Nor wept, nor knew who gazed upon't, and laid
Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
For it, with look that seemed to penetrate
The heavens—unutterable blessings—such
As God to dying parents only granted,
For infants left behind them in the world.
"God keep my child," we heard her say, and heard
No more: the Angel of the Covenant
Was come, and, faithful to his promise, stood
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
With many tears, and closed without a cloud.
They set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.

Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances;
The kind embracings of the heart—and hours
Of happy thought—and smiles coming to tears—
And glories of the heaven and starry cope
Above, and glories of the earth beneath:
These were the rays that wandered through the gloom
Of mortal life—wells of the wilderness;
Redeeming features in the face of Time;
Sweet drops, that made the mixed cup of Earth
A palatable draught—too bitter else.

About the joys and pleasures of the world,
This question was not seldom in debate—
Whether the righteous man, or sinner, had
The greatest share, and relished them the most?
Truth gives the answer thus, gives it distinct,
Nor needs to reason long: The righteous man.

Digitized by Google

For what was he denied of earthly growth,
Worthy the name of good? Truth answers—
Nought.
Had he not appetites, and sense, and will?
Might he not eat, if Providence allowed,
The finest of the wheat? Might he not drink
The choicest wine? True, he was temperate;
But then was temperance a foe to peace?
Might he not rise, and clothe himself in gold?
Ascend, and stand in palaces of kings?
True, he was honest still, and charitable:
Were then these virtues foes to human peace?
Might he not do exploits and gain a name?
Most true, he trod not down a fellow's right,
Nor walked up to a throne on skulls of men;
Were justice, then, and mercy, foes to peace?
Had he not friendships, loves, and smiles, and
hopes?
Sat not around his table sons and daughters?
Was not his ear with music pleased? his eye
With light? his nostrils with perfumes? his lips
With pleasant relishes? grew not his herds?
Fell not the rain upon his meadows? reaped
He not his harvests? and did not his heart
Revel at will through all the charities
And sympathies of nature, unconfined?
And were not these all sweetened, and sanctified
By dews of holiness shed from above?
Might he not walk through Fancy's airy halls?
Might he not History's ample page survey?
Might he not, finally, explore the depths
Of mental, moral, natural, divine?
But why enumerate thus? One word enough.
There was no joy in all created things,
No drop of sweet, that turned not in the end
To sour, of which the righteous man did not
Partake—partake, invited by the voice
Of God, his Father's voice—who gave him all
His heart's desire. And o'er the sinner still,
The Christian had this one advantage more,
That when his earthly pleasures failed, and fail
They always did to every soul of man,
He sent his hopes on high, looked up, and reached
His sickle forth, and reaped the fields of heaven,
And plucked the clusters from the vines of God.

Nor was the general aspect of the world
Always a moral waste: a time there came,
Though few believed it e'er should come—a time
Typed by the Sabbath day recurring once
In seven; and by the year of rest indulged
Septennial to the lands on Jordan's banks:
A time foretold by Judah's bards in words
Of fire: a time, seventh part of time, and set
Before the eighth and last—the Sabbath day
Of all the earth—when all had rest and peace.
Before its coming many to and fro
Ran; ran from various cause; by many sent
From various cause; upright, and crooked both.
Some sent, and ran for love of souls sincere;
And more at instance of a holy name.
With godly zeal much vanity was mixed;
And circumstance of gaudy civil pomp;
And speeches buying praise for praise; and lists,
And endless scrolls, surcharged with modest
names
That sought the public eye; and stories, told
In quackish phrase, that hurt their credit, even
When true—combined with wise and prudent
means,
Much wheat, much chaff, much gold, and much
alloy:
But God wrought with the whole—wrought most
with what
To man seemed weakest means—and brought
result
Of good from good and evil both; and breathed
Into the withered nations breath and life:
The breath and life of liberty and truth,
By means of knowledge breathed into the soul.

Then was the evil day of tyranny!
Of kingly and of priestly tyranny,
That bruised the nations long. As yet, no state
Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom's wine;
Though loud of freedom was the talk of all.
Some groaned more deeply, being heavier tasked
Some wrought with straw, and some without; but
all
Were slaves, or meant to be; for rulers still
Had been of equal mind—excepting few—
Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile;
And had with equal shoulder propped the Beast.
As yet, the Church, the holy spouse of God,
In members few, had wandered in her weeds
Of mourning, persecuted, scorned, reproached,
And buffeted, and killed—in members few,
Though seeming many whiles; then fewest oft,
When seeming most. She still had hung her
harp
Upon the willow-tree, and sighed, and wept
From age to age. Satan began the war;
And all his angels, and all wicked men,
Against her fought by wile, or fierce attack,
Six thousand years; but fought in vain. She
stood,
Troubled on every side, but not distressed:
Weeping, but yet despairing not! cast down,
But not destroyed: for she upon the palms
Of God was graven, and precious in his sight,
As apple of his eye; and like the bush
On Midia's mountain seen, burned unconsumed:
But to the wilderness retiring, dwelt,
Debased in sackcloth, and forlorn in tears.

As yet, had sung the scarlet-coloured whore,
Who on the breast of civil power reposed
Her harlot head—the Church a harlot then,
When first she wedded civil power—and drunk
The blood of martyred saints; whose priests
were lords;
Whose coffers held the gold of every land;
Who held a cup of all pollutions full;
Who with a double horn the people pushed;
And raised her forehead, full of blasphemy,
Above the holy God, usurping oft
Jehovah's incommunicable names.
The nations had been dark; the Jews had pined,
Scattered without a name, beneath the curse;
War had abounded; Satan raged unchained;
And earth had still been black with moral gloom.
But now the cry of men oppressed, went up
Before the Lord, and to remembrance came
The tears of all his saints—their tears, and
groans.
Wise men had read the number of the name:

Digitized by Google

The prophet-years had rolled; the time, and times,
And half a time, were now fulfilled complete;
The seven fierce vials of the wrath of God,
Poured by seven angels strong, were shed abroad
Upon the earth, and emptied to the dregs;
The prophecy for confirmation stood;
And all was ready for the sword of God.

The righteous saw, and fled without delay
Into the chambers of Omnipotence:
The wicked mocked, and sought for erring cause,
To satisfy the dismal state of things—
The public credit gone; the fear in time
Of peace; the starving want in time of wealth;
The insurrection muttering in the streets;
And pallid consternation spreading wide;
And leagues, though holy termed, first ratified
In hell, on purpose made to under-prop
Iniquity, and crush the sacred truth.

Meantime a mighty angel stood in heaven,
And cried aloud—Associate now yourselves,
Ye princes! potentates! and men of war!
And mitred heads! associate now yourselves,
And be dispersed: embattle, and be broken:
Gird on your armour, and be dashed to dust:
Take counsel, and it shall be brought to nought:
Speak, and it shall not stand.—And suddenly
The armies of the saints, imbannered, stood
On Zion hill; and with them angels stood,
In squadron bright, and chariots of fire;
And with them stood the Lord, clad like a man
Of war, and, to the sound of thunder, led
The battle on. Earth shook; the kingdoms shook;
The Beast, the lying Seer, dominions, fell;
Thrones, tyrants fell, confounded in the dust,
Scattered and driven before the breath of God,
As chaff of summer threshing-floor before
The wind. Three days the battle wasting slew.
The sword was full, the arrow drunk with blood;
And to the supper of Almighty God,
Spread in Hamonah's vale, the fowls of heaven,
And every beast, invited, came—and fed
On captains' flesh, and drank the blood of kings.

And lo! another angel stood in heaven,
Crying aloud with mighty voice: Fallen, fallen,
Is Babylon the Great—to rise no more!
Rejoice, ye prophets! over her rejoice,
Apostles! holy men, all saints, rejoice!
And glory give to God, and to the Lamb.—
And all the armies of disburdened earth,
As voice of many waters, and as voice
Of thunderings, and voice of multitudes,
Answered, Amen. And every hill and rock,
And sea, and every beast, answered, Amen.
Europa answered, and the farthest bounds
Of woody Chili, Asia's fertile coasts,
And Afric's burning wastes, answered, Amen.
And Heaven, rejoicing, answered back, Amen.

Not so the wicked: they afar were heard
Lamenting; kings who drank her cup of whoredoms,
Captains and admirals, and mighty men,
Who lived deliciously, and merchants, rich
With merchandise of gold, and wine, and oil;
And those who traded in the souls of men—
Known by their gaudy robes of priestly pomp;
All these afar off stood, crying, Alas!
Alas! and wept, and gnashed their teeth, and groaned:
And with the owl, that on her ruins sat,
Made dolorous concert in the ear of Night.
And over her again the heavens rejoiced.
And earth returned again the loud response.

Thrice happy days! thrice blest the man who saw
Their dawn! the Church and State, that long had held
Unholy intercourse, were now divorced;
Princes were righteous men; judges upright:
And first in general now—for in the worst
Of times there were some honest seers—the priest
Sought other than the fleece among his flocks—
Best paid when God was honoured most. And like
A cedar, nourished well, Jerusalem grew,
And towered on high, and spread, and flourished fair;
And underneath her boughs the nations lodged;
All nations lodged, and sung the song of peace.
From the four winds, the Jews, eased of the curse,
Returned, and dwelt with God in Jacob's land,
And drank of Sharon and of Carmel's vine.
Satan was bound; though bound, not banished quite;
But lurked about the timorous skirts of things,
Ill lodged, and thinking whiles to leave the earth;
And with the wicked, for some wicked were,
Held midnight meetings, as the saints were wont;
Fearful of day, who once was as the sun,
And worshipped more. The bad, but few, became
A taunt, and hissing now, as heretofore
The good; and, blushing, hasted out of sight.
Disease was none: the voice of war, forgot:
The sword, a share: a pruning-hook, the spear.
Men grew and multiplied upon the earth,
And filled the city, and the waste: and Death
Stood waiting for the lapse of tardy age,
That mocked him long. Men grew and multiplied,
But lacked not bread; for God his promise brought
To mind, and blessed the land with plenteous rain;
And made it blest, for dews, and precious things
Of heaven, and blessings of the deep beneath;
And blessings of the sun, and moon; and fruits
Of day and night; and blessings of the vale;
And precious things of the eternal hills;
And all the fulness of perpetual spring.

The prison-house, where chained felons pined,
Threw open his ponderous doors; let in the light
Of heaven; and grew into a church, where God
Was worshipped: none were ignorant; selfish none:
Love took the place of law; where'er you met
A man, you met a friend, sincere and true.
Kind looks foretold as kind a heart within;
Words as they sounded, meant; and promises
Were made to be performed. Thrice happy days!
Philosophy was sanctified, and saw

Digitized by Google

Perfection, which she thought a fable long.
Revenge his dagger dropped, and kissed the hand
Of Mercy: Anger cleared his cloudy brow,
And sat with Peace: Envy grew red, and smiled
On Worth: Pride stooped, and kissed Humility:
Lust washed his miry hands, and, wedded, leaned
On chaste Desire: and Falsehood laid aside
His many-folded cloak, and bowed to Truth:
And Treachery up from his mining came,
And walked above the ground with righteous Faith:
And Covetousness unclenched his sinewy hand,
And opened his door to Charity, the fair:
Hatred was lost in Love: and Vanity,
With a good conscience pleased, her feathers cropped:
Sloth in the morning rose with Industry:
To Wisdom, Folly turned: and Fashion turned
Deception off, in act as good as word.
The hand that held a whip was lifted up
To bless; slave was a word in ancient books
Met only; every man was free: and all
Feared God, and served him day and night in love.

How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then!
How gloriously from Zion Hill she looked!
Clothed with the sun; and in her train the moon;
And on her head a coronet of stars;
And girding round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of Mercy bright; and in her hand,
Immanuel's cross—her sceptre, and her hope.

Desire of every land! The nations came,
And worshipped at her feet; all nations came,
Flocking like doves. Columba's painted tribes,
That from Magellan to the Frozen Bay,
Beneath the Arctic dwelt, and drank the tides
Of Amazona, prince of earthly streams;
Or slept at noon beneath the giant shade
Of Andes' mount; or roving northward, heard
Niagara sing, from Erie's billow down,
To Frontenac, and hunted thence the fur
To Labrador. And Afric's dusky swarms,
That from Morocco to Angola dwelt,
And drank the Niger from his native wells,
Or roused the lion in Numidia's groves;
The tribes that sat among the fabled cliffs
Of Atlas, looking to Atlanta's wave,
With joy and melody arose and came;
Zara awoke, and came; and Egypt came,
Casting her idol gods into the Nile.
Black Ethiopia, that shadowless,
Beneath the Torrid burned, arose and came;
Dauma and Medra, and the pirate tribes
Of Algeri, with incense came, and pure
Offerings, annoying now the seas no more.
The silken tribes of Asia flocking came,
Innumerous; Ishmael's wandering race, that rode
On camels o'er the spicy tract that lay
From Persia, to the Red Sea coast: the king
Of broad Cathay, with numbers infinite,
Of many lettered casts; and all the tribes
That dwelt from Tigris to the Ganges' wave;
And worshipped fire, or Brahma, fabled god!
Cashmeres, Circassians, Banyans, tender race!
That swept the insect from their path, and lived
On herbs and fruits; and those who peaceful dwelt
Along the shady avenue that stretched
From Agra to Lahore: and all the hosts
That owned the Crescent late, deluded long.
The Tartar hordes that roamed from Oby's bank,
Ungoverned, southward to the wonderous Wall.
The tribes of Europe came; the Greek, redeemed
From Turkish thrall; the Spaniard came, and Gaul,
And Britain with her ships; and on his sledge,
The Laplander, that nightly watched the bear
Circling the Pole; and those who saw the flames
Of Hecla burn the drifted snow: the Russ,
Long whiskered, and equestrian Pole; and those
Who drank the Rhine, or lost the evening sun
Behind the Alpine towers; and she that sat
By Arno, classic stream; Venice; and Rome,
Head quarters long of sin! first guileless now,
And meaning as she seemed, stretched forth her hands.
And all the isles of ocean rose and came,
Whether they heard the roll of banished tides,
Antipodes to Albion's wave; or watched
The moon ascending chalky Teneriffe,
And with Atlanta holding nightly love.
The Sun, the Moon, the Constellations came:
Thrice twelve and ten that watched the Antarctic sleep;
Twice six that near the Ecliptic dwelt; thrice twelve
And one, that with the Streamers danced, and saw
The Hyperborean ice, guarding the Pole.
The East, the West, the South, and snowy North,
Rejoicing met, and worshipped reverently
Before the Lord, in Zion's holy hill;
And all the places round about were blest.
The animals, as once in Eden, lived
In peace: the wolf dwelt with the lamb; the bear
And leopard with the ox; with looks of love,
The tiger, and the scaly crocodile,
Togther met, at Gambia's palmy wave:
Perched on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
Singing, arose and visited the sun;
And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
The little child leaped from his mother's arms,
And stroked the crested snake, and rolled unhurt
Among his speckled waves—and wished him home:
And sauntering school-boys, slow returning played
At eve about the lion's den, and wove
Into his shaggy mane, fantastic flowers:
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head:
And round its dewy steps, the hare, unscared,
Sported, and toyed familiar with his dog:
The flocks and herds, o'er hill and valley spread
Exulting, cropped the ever-budding herb:
The desert blossomed, and the barren sung:
Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love,
Among the people walked: Messiah reigned:
And Earth kept Jubilee a thousand years

Digitized by Google

BOOK VI.

ANALYSIS.

The Bard commences to sing of the final destruction of the earth. But checking himself, he sings of the time which followed the millennial rest.

Impiety and ungodliness abounded. Active ambition, and indolent sloth regained a general ascendency, and sin in every form, as had existed before the millennium, was renewed, and new forms were invented. The universal contempt of God was wholly wilful, for the age was polished and enlightened.

Wondrous sights and strange forbodings gave presage of the earth's approaching dissolution. "Perplexed, but not reformed," the race of men inquired the explanation of the prodigies; all warnings were soon forgotten, men continued following their guilty pleasures, and the earth filled up the measure of her wickedness.

A pause in the narrative; as the numerous hosts of heaven look towards the unveiled Godhead, and join in the evening hymn of praise. The prophet Isaiah takes the harp, and before the throne, sings the holy song. At its close, thousands of thousands, infinite, devoutly respond, Amen.

Resume thy tone of woe, immortal harp!
The song of mirth is past; the Jubilee
Is ended; and the sun begins to fade.
Soon past: for Happiness counts not the hours:
To her a thousand years seem as a day:
A day a thousand years to misery.
Satan is loose, and Violence is heard,
And Riot in the street, and Revelry
Intoxicate, and Murder and Revenge.
Put on your armour now, ye righteous! put
The helmet of salvation on, and gird
Your loins about with truth; add righteousness,
And add the shield of faith; and take the sword
Of God: awake! and watch: the day is near:
Great day of God Almighty, and the Lamb.
The harvest of the earth is fully ripe:
Vengeance begins to tread the great wine-press
Of fierceness and of wrath; and Mercy pleads,
Mercy that pleaded long—she pleads no more.
Whence comes that darkness? whence those yells of woe?
What thunderings are these, that shake the world?
Why fall the lamps from heaven as blasted figs?
Why tremble righteous men? why angels pale?
Why is all fear? what has become of hope?
God comes! God in his car of vengeance comes!
Hark! louder on the blast, come hollow shrieks
Of dissolution; in the fitful scowl
Of night, near and more near, angels of death
Incessant flap their deadly wings, and roar
Through all the fevered air; the mountains rock;
The moon is sick; and all the stars of heaven
Burn feebly; oft and sudden gleams the fire,
Revealing awfully the brow of wrath.
The Thunder, long and loud, utters his voice,
Responsive to the ocean's troubled growl.
Night comes, last night; the long dark, dark, dark night,
That has no morn beyond it, and no star.
No eye of man hath seen a night like this!
Heaven's trampled justice girds itself for fight:
Earth to thy knees, and cry for mercy! cry
With earnest heart; for thou art growing old
And hoary, unrepented, unforgiven:
And all thy glory mourns: thy vintage mourns;
Bashan and Carmel! mourn and weep: and mourn
Thou Lebanon! with all thy cedars mourn.
Sun! glorying in thy strength from age to age,
So long observant of thy hour, put on
Thy weeds of woe, and tell the moon to weep;
Utter thy grief at mid-day, morn, and even;
Tell all the nations, tell the clouds that sit
About the portals of the east and west,
And wanton with thy golden locks, to wait
Thee not to-morrow; for no morrow comes,
Tell men and women, tell the new-born child,
And every eye that sees, to come, and see
Thee set behind Eternity; for thou
Shalt go to bed to-night, and ne'er awake.
Stars! walking on the pavement of the sky,
Out sentinels of heaven! watching the earth,
Cease dancing now: your lamps are growing dim;
Your graves are dug among the dismal clouds;
And angels are assembling round your bier.
Orion! mourn: and Mazzaroth: and thou,
Arcturus! mourn, with all thy northern sons.
Daughters of Pleiades! that nightly shed
Sweet influence: and thou, fairest of the stars!
Eye of the morning, weep—and weep at eve;
Weep setting, now to rise no more, "and flame
On forehead of the dawn"—as sung the bard:
Great bard! who used on Earth a seraph's lyre,
Whose numbers wandered through eternity,
And gave sweet foretaste of the heavenly harps.
Minstrel of sorrow! native of the dark!
Shrub-loving Philomel! that wooed the dews
At midnight from their starry beds, and, charmed,
Held them around thy song till dawn awoke—
Sad bird! pour through the gloom thy weeping song:
Pour all thy dying melody of grief,
And with the turtle spread the wave of woe—
Spare not thy reed, for thou shalt sing no more.

Ye holy bards! if yet a holy bard
Remain, what chord shall serve you now? what harp!
What harp shall sing the dying sun asleep,
And mourn behind the funeral of the moon!
What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless woe,
Shall utter forth the groanings of the damned;
And sing the obsequies of wicked souls;
And wail their plunge in the eternal fire!
Hold, hold your hands; hold angels; God laments,
And draws a cloud of mourning round his throne
The Organ of eternity is mute;
And there is silence in the heaven of heavens!
Daughters of beauty! choice of beings made!
Much praised, much blamed, much loved; but fairer far

Digitized by Google

Than aught beheld; than aught imagined else
Fairest; and dearer than all else most dear;
Light of the darksome wilderness! to Time
As stars to night—whose eyes were spells that held
The passenger forgetful of his way;
Whose steps were majesty; whose words were song;
Whose smiles were hope; whose actions, perfect grace;
Whose love the solace, glory, and delight
Of man, his boast, his riches, his renown:
When found, sufficient bliss; when lost, despair:
Stars of creation! images of love!
Break up the fountains of your tears; your tears
More eloquent than learned tongue, or lyre
Of purest note; your sunny raiment stain;
Put dust upon your heads; lament and weep;
And utter all your minstrelsy of woe.

Go to, ye wicked, weep and howl; for all
That God hath written against you is at hand.
The cry of violence hath reached his ear;
Hell is prepared; and Justice whets his sword.
Weep all of every name: begin the woe,
Ye woods, and tell it to the doleful winds;
And doleful winds, wail to the howling hills;
And howling hills, mourn to the dismal vales;
And dismal vales, sigh to the sorrowing brooks;
And sorrowing brooks, weep to the weeping stream;
And weeping stream, awake the groaning deep;
And let the instrument take up the song,
Responsive to the voice—harmonious woe!
Ye heavens, great archway of the universe!
Put sackcloth on; and Ocean clothe thyself
In garb of widowhood, and gather all
Thy waves into a groan, and utter it—
Long, loud, deep, piercing, dolorous, immense:
The occasion asks it; Nature dies; and God,
And angels, come to lay her in the grave!

But we have overleaped our theme: behind,
A little season waits a verse or two:
The years that followed the millennial rest.
Bad years they were; and first, as signal sure,
That at the core religion was diseased,
The sons of Levi strove again for place,
And eminence, and names of swelling pomp,
Setting their feet upon the people's neck,
And slumbering in the lap of civil power;
Of civil power again tyrannical.
And second sign, sure sign, whenever seen,
That holiness was dying in a land,
The Sabbath was profaned, and set at nought:
The honest seer, who spoke the truth of God
Plainly, was left with empty walls; and round
The frothy orator, who busked his tales
In quackish pomp of noisy words, the ear
Tickling, but leaving still the heart unprobed,
The judgment uninformed,—numbers immense
Flocked, gaping wide, with passions high inflamed;
And on the way returning, heated, home,
Of eloquence, and not of truth, conversed—
Mean eloquence that wanted sacred truth.

Two principles from the beginning strove
In human nature, still dividing man—
Sloth and activity, the lust of praise,
And indolence, that rather wished to sleep.
And not unfrequently in the same mind,
They dubious contest held: one gaining now,
And now the other crowned, and both again
Keeping the field, with equal combat fought.
Much different was their voice: Ambition called
To action; Sloth invited to repose.
Ambition early rose, and, being up,
Toiled ardently, and late retired to rest;
Sloth lay till mid-day, turning on his couch,
Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge,
And having rolled him out with much ado,
And many a dismal sigh, and vain attempt,
He sauntered out accoutred carelessly—
With half-oped, misty, unobservant eye,
Somniferous, that weighed the object down
On which its burden fell—an hour or two,
Then with a groan retired to rest again.
The one, whatever deed had been achieved,
Thought it too little, and too small the praise:
The other tried to think—for thinking so
Answered his purpose best—that what of great
Mankind could do, had been already done;
And therefore laid him calmly down to sleep.

Different in mode—destructive both alike;
Destructive always indolence; and love
Of fame destructive always too, if less
Than praise of God it sought—content with less,
Even then not current, if it sought his praise
From other motive than resistless love:
Though base, main-spring of action in the world;
And under name of vanity and pride,
Was greatly practised on by cunning men.
It opened the niggard's purse; clothed nakedness;
Gave beggars food; and threw the Pharisee
Upon his knees, and kept him long in act
Of prayer; it spread the lace upon the fop,
His language trimmed, and planned his curious gait;
It stuck the feather on the gay coquette,
And on her finger laid the heavy load
Of jewelry; it did—what did it not?
The gospel preached, the gospel paid, and sent
The gospel; conquered nations; cities built;
Measured the furrow of the field with nice
Directed share; shaped bulls, and cows, and rams:
And threw the ponderous stone; and pitiful,
Indeed, and much against the grain, it dragged
The stagnant, dull, predestinated fool,
Through learning's halls, and made him labour much
Abortively; though sometimes not unpraised
He left the sage's chair, and home returned,
Making his simple mother think that she
Had borne a man. In schools, designed to root
Sin up, and plant the seeds of holiness
In youthful minds, it held a signal place.
The little infant man, by nature proud,
Was taught the Scriptures by the love of praise,
And grew religious as he grew in fame.
And thus the principle, which out of heaven
The devil threw, and threw him down to hell,
And keeps him there, was made an instrument
To moralize, and sanctify mankind:

Digitized by Google

And in their hearts beget humility:
With what success it needs not now to say.

Destructive both we said, activity,
And sloth—behold the last exemplified,
In literary man. Not all at once,
He yielded to the soothing voice of sleep;
But having seen a bough of laurel wave,
He effort made to climb; and friends, and even
Himself, talked of his greatness, as at hand,
And prophesying drew his future life.
Vain prophecy! his fancy, taught by sloth,
Saw in the very threshold of pursuit,
A thousand obstacles; he halted first,
And while he halted, saw his burning hopes,
Grow dim and dimmer still: ambition's self,
The advocate of loudest tongue, decayed;
His purposes, made daily, daily broken,
Like plant uprooted oft, and set again,
More sickly grew, and daily wavered more:
Till at the last, decision, quite worn out,
Decision, fulcrum of the mental powers,
Resigned the blasted soul to staggering chance;
Sleep gathered fast, and weighed him downward still;
His eye fell heavy from the mount of fame;
His young resolves to benefit the world,
Perished, and were forgotten; he shut his ear
Against the painful news of rising worth;
And drank with desperate thirst the poppy's juice;
A deep and mortal slumber settled down
Upon his weary faculties oppressed;
He rolled from side to side, and rolled again;
And snored, and groaned, and withered, and expired,
And rotted on the spot, leaving no name.

The hero best example gives of toil
Unsanctified. One word his history writes:
He was a murderer above the laws,
And greatly praised for doing murderous deeds:
And now he grew, and reached his perfect growth.
And also now the sluggard soundly slept,
And by him lay the uninterred corpse.

Of every order, sin and wickedness,
Deliberate, cool, malicious villany,
This age, attained maturity, unknown
Before: and seemed in travail to bring forth
Some last, enormous, monstrous deed of guilt—
Original, unprecedented guilt,
That might obliterate the memory
Of what had hitherto been done most vile.
Inventive men were paid, at public cost,
To plan new modes of sin: the holy word
Of God was burned, with acclamations loud;
New tortures were invented for the good:
For still some good remained, as whiles through sky
Of thickest clouds, a wandering star appeared:
New oaths of blasphemy were framed, and sworn:
And men in reputation grew, as grew
The stature of their crimes: Faith was not found;
Truth was not found; truth always scarce; so scarce
That half the misery which groaned on earth,
In ordinary times, was progeny
Of disappointment daily coming forth
From broken promises, that might have ne'er
Been made, or being made, might have been kept.
Justice and mercy too were rare, obscured
In cottage garb: before the palace door,
The beggar rotted, starving in his rags:
And on the threshold of luxurious domes,
The orphan child laid down his head, and died;
Nor unamusing was his piteous cry
To women, who had now laid tenderness
Aside, best pleased with sights of cruelty;
Flocking, when fouler lusts would give them time,
To horrid spectacles of blood; where men,
Or guiltless beasts, that seemed to look to heaven,
With eye imploring vengeance on the earth,
Were tortured for the merriment of kings.
The advocate for him who offered most
Pleaded; the scribe, according to the hire,
Worded the lie, adding for every piece,
An oath of confirmation; judges raised
One hand to intimate the sentence, death,
Imprisonment, or fine, or loss of goods,
And in the other held a lusty bribe,
Which they had taken to give the sentence wrong;
So managing the scale of justice still,
That he was wanting found who poorest seemed.

But laymen, most renowned for devilish deeds,
Laboured at distance still behind the priest:
He shore his sheep, and having packed the wool,
Sent them unguarded to the hill of wolves;
And to the bowl deliberately sat down,
And with his mistress mocked at sacred things.
The theatre was from the very first
The favourite haunt of sin; though honest men,
Some very honest, wise, and worthy men,
Maintained it might be turned to good account;
And so perhaps it might; but never was.
From first to last it was an evil place:
And now such things were acted there, as made
The devils blush: and from the neighbourhood,
Angels and holy men, trembling, retired.
And what with dreadful aggravation crowned
This dreary time, was sin against the light;
All men knew God, and, knowing, disobeyed;
And gloried to insult him to his face.

Another feature only we shall mark.—
It was withal a highly polished age,
And scrupulous in ceremonious rite.
When stranger stranger met upon the way,
First each to each bowed most respectfully,
And large profession made of humble service,
And then the stronger took the other's purse.
And he that stabbed his neighbour to the heart,
Stabbed him politely, and returned the blade
Reeking into its sheath, with graceful air.

Meantime the earth gave symptoms of her end;
And all the scenery above proclaimed,
That the great last catastrophe was near.
The sun at rising staggered and fell back,
As one too early up, after a night
Of late debauch; then rose, and shone again,
Brighter than wont; and sickened again, and paused
In zenith altitude, as one fatigued;
And shed a feeble twilight ray at noon,
Rousing the wolf before his time, to chase

Digitized by Google

The shepherd and his sheep, that sought for light,
And darkness found, astonished, terrified;
Then out of course rolled furious down the west,
As chariot reined by awkward charioteer,
And waiting at the gate, he on the earth
Gazed, as he thought he ne'er might see't again.
The bow of mercy, heretofore so fair,
Ribbed with the native hues of heavenly love,
Disastrous colours showed, unseen till now;
Changing upon the watery gulf, from pale
To fiery red, and back again to pale;
And o'er it hovered wings of wrath. The moon,
Swaggered in midst of heaven, grew black and dark,
Unclouded, uneclipsed. The stars fell down;
Tumbling from off their towers like drunken men;
Or seemed to fall—and glimmered now; and now
Sprang out in sudden blaze; and dimmed again;
As lamp of foolish virgin lacking oil;
The heavens this moment looked serene; the next,
Glowed like an oven with God's displeasure hot.

Nor less below was intimation given
Of some disaster great and ultimate.
The tree that bloomed, or hung with clustering fruit,
Untouched by visible calamity
Of frost or tempest, died and came again;
The flower, and herb, fell down as sick; then rose
And fell again: the fowls of every hue,
Crowding together, sailed on weary wing,
And hovering, oft they seemed about to light;
Then soared, as if they thought the earth unsafe:
The cattle looked with meaning face on man:
Dogs howled, and seemed to see more than their masters;
And there were sights that none had seen before;
And hollow, strange, unprecedented sounds;
And earnest whisperings ran along the hills
At dead of night; and long, deep, endless sighs,
Came from the dreary vale; and from the waste
Came horrid shrieks, and fierce unearthly groans,
The wail of evil spirits, that now felt
The hour of utter vengeance near at hand.
The winds from every quarter blew at once,
With desperate violence, and, whirling, took
The traveller up, and threw him down again
At distance from his path, confounded, pale.
And shapes, strange shapes! in winding sheets were seen,
Gliding through night, and singing funeral songs,
And imitating sad sepulchral rites:
And voices talked among the clouds; and still
The words that men could catch, were spoken of them,
And seemed to be the words of wonder great,
And expectation of some vast event.
Earth shook, and swam, and reeled, and opened her jaws,
By earthquake tossed, and tumbled to and fro:
And louder than the ear of man had heard,
The thunder bellowed, and the ocean groaned.

The race of men, perplexed, but not reformed,
Flocking together, stood in earnest crowds,
Conversing of the awful state of things.
Some curious explanations gave, unlearned;
Some tried affectedly to laugh; and some
Gazed stupidly; but all were sad, and pale;
And wished the comment of the wise. Nor less
These prodigies, occurring night and day,
Perplexed philosophy: the magi tried—
Magi, a name not seldom given to fools,
In the vocabulary of earthly speech—
They tried to trace them still to second cause;
But scarcely satisfied themselves; though round
Their deep deliberations crowding came,
And wondering at their wisdom, went away,
Much quieted, and very much deceived
The people, always glad to be deceived.

These warnings passed—they unregarded passed;
And all in wonted order calmly moved.
The pulse of Nature regularly beat,
And on her cheek the bloom of perfect health
Again appeared. Deceitful pulse! and bloom
Deceitful! and deceitful calm! The Earth
Was old and worn within; but, like the man,
Who noticed not his mid-day strength decline,
Sliding so gently round the curvature
Of life, from youth to age—she knew it not.
The calm was like the calm, which oft the man
Dying, experienced before his death;
The bloom was but a hectic flush, before
The eternal paleness: but all these were taken,
By this last race of men, for tokens of good;
And blustering public News aloud proclaimed
News always gabbling, ere they well had thought—
Prosperity, and joy, and peace; and mocked
The man who, kneeling, prayed, and trembled still.
And all in earnest to their sins returned.

It was not so in heaven—the elders round
The throne conversed about the state of man,
Conjecturing, for none of certain knew,
That Time was at an end. They gazed intense
Upon the Dial's face, which yonder stands
In gold, before the Sun of Righteousness,
Jehovah; and computes times, seasons, years,
And destinies; and slowly numbers o'er
The mighty cycles of eternity;
By God alone completely understood;
But read by all, revealing much to all.
And now to saints of eldest skill, the ray,
Which on the gnomon fell of time, seemed sent
From level west, and hasting quickly down.
The holy Virtues, watching, saw besides,
Great preparation going on in heaven,
Betokening great event; greater than aught
That first created seraphim had seen.
The faithful messengers, who have for wing
The lightning, waiting day and night, on God.
Before his face—beyond their usual speed,
On pinion of celestial light, were seen,
Coming and going, and their road was still
From heaven to earth, and back again to heaven
The angel of Mercy, bent before the Throne,
By earnest pleading, seemed to hold the hand
Of Vengeance back, and win a moment more
Of late repentance for some sinful world
In jeopardy. And now the hill of God,
The mountain of his majesty, rolled flames
Of fire; now smiled with momentary love:

Digitized by Google

And now again with fiery fierceness burned:
And from behind the darkness of his Throne,
Through which created vision never saw,
The living thunders, in their native caves,
Muttered the terrors of Omnipotence,
And ready seemed, impatient to fulfil
Some errand of exterminating wrath.

Meanwhile the Earth increased in wickedness,
And hasted daily to fill up her cup.
Satan raged loose; Sin had her will; and Death
Enough: blood trode upon the heels of blood;
Revenge, in desperate mood, at midnight met
Revenge; war brayed to war; deceit deceived
Deceit; lie cheated lie; and treachery
Mined under treachery; and perjury
Swore back on perjury; and blasphemy
Arose with hideous blasphemy; and curse
Loud answered curse; and drunkard stumbling fell
O'er drunkard fallen; and husband husband met
Returning each from other's bed defiled;
Thief stole from thief; and robber on the way
Knocked robber down; and lewdness, violence,
And hate, met lewdness, violence, and hate.
Oh Earth! thy hour was come; the last elect
Was born; complete the number of the good;
And the last sand fell from the glass of Time.
The cup of guilt was full up to the brim;
And Mercy, weary with beseeching, had
Retired behind the sword of Justice, red
With ultimate and unrepenting wrath:
But man knew not: he o'er his bowl laughed loud;
And prophesying, said: To-morrow shall
As this day be, and more abundant still—
As thou shalt hear. But hark! the trumpet sounds,
And calls to evening song; for, though with hymn
Eternal, course succeeding course, extol
In presence of the incarnate, holy God,
And celebrate his never-ending praise,—
Duly at morn, and night, the multitudes
Of men redemed, and angels, all the hosts
Of glory, join in universal song;
And pour celestial harmony, from harps
Above all number, eloquent and sweet
Above all thought of melody conceived.
And now behold the fair inhabitants,
Delightful sight. from numerous business turn,
And round and round through all the extent of bliss,
Towards the temple of Jehovah bow,
And worship reverently before his face!

Pursuits are various here, suiting all tastes:
Though holy all, and glorifying God.
Observe yon band pursue the sylvan stream!
Mounting among the cliffs—they pull the flower,
Springing as soon as pulled; and marvelling, pry
Into its veins, and circulating blood,
And wondrous mimicry of higher life;
Admire its colours, fragrance, gentle shape;
And thence admire the God who made it so—
So simple, complex, and so beautiful.

Behold yon other band, in airy robes
Of bliss—they weave the sacred bower of rose
And myrtle shade, and shadowy verdant bay,
And laurel towering high; and round their song,
The pink and lily bring, and amaranth;
Narcissus sweet, and jessamine; and bring
The clustering vine, stooping with flower and fruit:
The peach and orange, and the sparkling stream,
Warbling with nectar to their lips unasked;
And talk the while of everlasting love.

On yonder hill, behold another band,
Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye,
And spacious forehead, of sublimest thought—
They reason deep of present, future, past;
And trace effect to cause; and meditate
On the eternal laws of God, which bind
Circumference to centre; and survey
With optic tubes, that fetch remotest stars
Near them, the systems circling round immense,
Innumerous. See how—as he, the sage,
Among the most renowned in days of Time,
Renowned for large, capacious, holy soul—
Demonstrates, clearly, motion, gravity,
Attraction, and repulsions, still opposed;
And dips into the deep, original,
Unknown, mysterious elements of things—
See how the face of every auditor
Expands with admiration of the skill,
Omnipotence, and boundless love of God!

These other, sitting near the tree of life,
In robes of linen flowing white and clean,
Of holiest aspect, of divinest soul,
Angels and men—into the glory look
Of the Redeeming Love, and turn the leaves
Of man's redemption o'er; the secret leaves,
Which none on earth were found worthy to open:
And as they read the mysteries divine,
The endless mysteries of Salvation wrought
By God's incarnate Son, they humbler bow
Before the Lamb; and glow with warmer love.
These other, there relaxed beneath the shade
Of yon embowering palms, with friendship smile,
And talk of ancient days, and young pursuits,
Of dangers past, of godly triumphs won;
And sing the legends of their native land—
Less pleasing far than this their Father's house.

Behold that other band, half lifted up
Between the hill and dale, reclined beneath
The shadow of impending rocks; 'mong streams
And thundering waterfalls, and waving boughs,
That band of countenance sublime and sweet,
Whose eye with piercing intellectual ray,
Now beams severe, or now bewildered seems;
Left rolling wild, or fixed in idle gaze,
While Fancy, and the soul are far from home.
These hold the pencil—art divine! and throw
Before the eye remembered scenes of love:
Each picturing to each the hills, and skies,
And treasured stories of the world he left;
Or, gazing on the scenery of heaven,
They dip their hand in colour's native well,
And, on the everlasting canvass, dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection knit.

But whatsoe'er these spirits blest pursue,
Where'er they go, whatever sights they see

Digitized by Google

Of glory and bliss through all the tracts of heaven,
The centre still, the figure eminent,
Whither they ever turn, on whom all eyes
Repose with infinite delight—is God,
And his incarnate Son, the Lamb, once slain
On Calvalry, to ransom ruined men.

None idle here: look where thou wilt, they all
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit;
Not happy else. Hence is it that the song
Of heaven is ever new; for daily thus,
And nightly, new discoveries are made,
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power, and love,
Which give the understanding larger room,
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.

Behold they cease! and every face to God
Turns; and we pause, from high poetic theme
Not worthy least of being sung in heaven,
And on unveiled Godhead look from this,
Our oft frequented hill.—He takes the harp,
Nor needs to seek befitting phrase; unsought,
Numbers harmonious roll along the lyre;
As river in its native bed, they flow
Spontaneous, flowing with the tide of thought.
He takes the harp—a bard of Judah leads
This night the boundless song: the bard that once,
When Israel's king was sad and sick to death,
A message brought of fifteen added years.
Before the throne he stands sublime, in robes
Of glory: and now his fingers wake the chords
To praise, which we, and all in heaven repeat.

Harps of eternity! begin the song,
Redeemed, and angel harps! begin to God,
Begin the anthem ever sweet and new,
While I extol Him holy, just, and good.
Life, beauty, light, intelligence, and love?
Eternal, uncreated, infinite!
Unsearchable Jehovah! God of truth!
Maker, upholder, governor of all:
Thyself unmade, ungoverned, unupheld.
Omnipotent, unchangeable, Great God!
Exhaustless fulness! giving unimpaired!
Bounding immensity, unspread, unbound!
Highest and best! beginning, middle, end.
All-seeing Eye! all-seeing, and unseen!
Hearing, unheard! all knowing, and unknown!
Above all praise! above all height of thought!
Proprietor of immortality!
Glory ineffable! Bliss underived!
Of old thou built'st thy throne on righteousness,
Before the morning Stars their song began,
Or silence heard the voice of praise. Thou laid'st
Eternity's foundation stone, and saw'st
Life and existence out of Thee begin.
Mysterious more, the more displayed, where still
Upon thy glorious Throne thou sitt'st alone;
Hast sat alone; and shalt for ever sit
Alone; invisible, immortal One!
Behind essential brightness unbeheld.
Incomprehensible! what weight shall weigh,
What measure measure Thee? what know we more
Of Thee, what need to know, than Thou hast taught,
And bidd'st us still repeat, at morn and even—
God! everlasting Father! holy One!
Our God, our Father, our Eternal All.
Source whence we came: and whither we return
Who made our spirits, who our bodies made;
Who made the heaven, who made the flowery land;
Who made all made; who orders, governs all;
Who walks upon the wind; who holds the wave
In hollow of thy hand; whom thunders wait;
Whom tempests serve; whom flaming fires obey:
Who guides the circuit of the endless years:
And sitt'st on high, and mak'st creation's top
Thy footstool: and behold'st below Thee, all—
All nought, all less than nought, and vanity.
Like transient dust that hovers on the scale,
Ten thousand worlds are scattered in thy breath
Thou sitt'st on high, and measur'st destinies,
And days, and months, and wide revolving years:
And dost according to thy holy will;
And none can stay thy hand; and none withhold
Thy glory; for in judgment, Thou, as well
As mercy, art exalted day and night;
Past, present, future, magnify thy name.
Thy works all praise Thee: all thy angels praise:
Thy saints adore, and on thy altars burn
The fragrant incense of perpetual love.
They praise Thee now: their hearts, their voices praise,
And swell the rapture of the glorious song.
Harp! lift thy voice on high—shout, angels shout!
And loudest ye redeemed! glory to God,
And to the Lamb, who bought us with his blood,
From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;
And washed, and sanctified, and saved our souls;
And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns
Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.
Shout back to ancient Time! Sing loud, and wave
Your palms of triumph! sing, Where is thy sting,
O Death? where is thy victory, O grave?
Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave
Us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Harp, lift thy voice on high! shout, angels shout,
And loudest ye redeemed! glory to God,
And to the Lamb—all glory and all praise;
All glory and all praise, at morn and even,
That come and go eternally; and find
Us happy still, and Thee for ever blest.
Glory to God, and to the Lamb. Amen.
For ever, and for evermore. Amen.

And those who stood upon the sea of glass;
And those who stood upon the battlements,
And lofty towers of New Jerusalem;
And those who circling stood, bowing afar;
Exalted on the everlasting hills,
Thousands of thousands—thousands infinite—
With voice of boundless love, answered: Amen.
And through eternity, near, and remote,
The worlds adoring, echoed back: Amen.
And God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—
The One Eternal! smiled superior bliss.
And every eye, and every face in heaven,
Reflecting, and reflected, beamed with love.

Nor did he not—the Virtue new arrived.
From Godhead gain an individual smile,
Of high acceptance, and of welcome high,
And confirmation evermore in good.

Digitized by Google

Meantime the landscape glowed with holy joy.
Zephyr, with wing dipt from the well of life,
Sporting through Paradise, shed living dews:
The flowers, the spicy shrubs, the lawns refreshed,
Breathed their selectest balm; breathed odours, such
As angels love: and all the trees of heaven,
The cedar, pine, and everlasting oak,
Rejoicing on the mountains, clapped their hands.

BOOK VII.

ANALYSIS.

After the Hymn, the relation is resumed. The transformation of the living, the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of the Earth.

On the morn of the final day all the appearances of nature were as usual, at mid-day universal darkness prevailed, and all action, all motion ceased: and an angel from heaven proclaimed, "Time should be no more." And another Angel sounded the Trump of God, when the dead awoke, and the living were changed.

A description of the circumstances connected with the momentous scene; the living were changed in the midst of their several numerous avocations; in labour, study, pleasure, or crimes. The dead of every age and place raised to life; in the cultivated field, in the wilderness, in populous cities, in the midst of ancient ruins, and from the great ocean.

As one who meditates at evening tide,
Wandering alone by voiceless solitudes,
And flies in fancy, far beyond the bounds
Of visible and vulgar things, and things
Discovered hitherto, pursuing tracts
As yet untravelled, and unknown, through vast
Of new and sweet imaginings; if chance
Some airy harp, waked by the gentle sprites
Of twilight, or light touch of sylvan maid,
In soft succession fall upon his ear,
And fill the desert with its heavenly tones,
He listens intense, and pleased exceedingly,
And wishes it may never stop; yet when
It stops, grieves not; but to his former thoughts
With fondest haste returns: so did the Seer,
So did his audience, after worship past,
And praise in heaven, return to sing, to hear
Of man; not worthy less the sacred lyre,
Or the attentive ear: and thus the bard,
Not unbesought, again resumed his song.

In customed glory bright, that morn the sun
Rose, visiting the earth with light, and heat,
And joy; and seemed as full of youth, and strong
To mount the steep of heaven, as when the Stars
Of morning sung to his first dawn, and night
Fled from his face: the spacious sky received
Him, blushing as a bride, when on her looked
The bridegroom: and, spread out beneath his eye
Earth smiled. Up to his warm embrace the dews
That all night long had wept his absence, flew:
The herbs and flowers their fragrant stores unlocked,
And gave the wanton breeze, that, newly woke,
Revelled in sweets, and from its wings shook health,
A thousand grateful smells: the joyous woods
Dried in his beams their locks, wet with the drops
Of night: and all the sons of music sung
Their matin song; from arboured bower, the thrush
Concerting with the lark that hymned on high:
On the green hill the flocks, and in the vale
The herbs rejoiced: and, light of heart, the hind
Eyed amorously the milk-maid as she passed,
Not heedless, though she looked another way.

No sign was there of change: all nature moved
In wonted harmony: men as they met
In morning salutation, praised the day,
And talked of common things: the husbandman
Prepared the soil, and silver tongued Hope
Promised another harvest: in the streets,
Each wishing to make profit of his neighbour,
Merchants, assembling, spoke of trying times,
Of bankruptcies, and markets glutted full:
Or crowding to the beach, where, to their ear,
The oath of foreign accent, and the noise
Uncouth of trade's rough sons, made music sweet,
Elate with certain gain, beheld the bark,
Expected long, enriched with other climes,
Into the harbour safely steer; or saw,
Parting with many a weeping farewell sad,
And blessing uttered rude, and sacred pledge,
The rich laden carrack, bound to distant shore;
And hopefully talked of her coming back
With richer freight: or sitting at the desk,
In calculation deep and intricate,
Of loss and profit balancing, relieved
At intervals the irksome task, with thought
Of future ease, retired in villa snug.

With subtle look, amid his parchments sat
The lawyer, weaving his sophistries for court
To meet at mid-day. On his weary couch
Fat luxury, sick of the night's debauch,
Lay groaning, fretful at the obstrusive beam,
That through his lattice peeped derisively:
The restless miser had begun again
To count his heaps: before her toilet stood
The fair, and, as with guileful skill she decked
Her loveliness, thought of the coming ball,
New lovers, or the sweeter nuptial night.
And evil men, of desperate lawless life,
By oath of deep damnation leagued to ill
Remorselessly, fled from the face of day,
Against the innocent their counsel held,
Plotting unpardonable deeds of blood,
And villanies of fearful magnitude:
Despots, secured behind a thousand bolts,
The workmanship of fear, forged chains for man
Senates were meeting: statesmen loudly talked
Of national resources, war and peace;
And sagely balanced empires soon to end:
And faction's jaded minions, by the page

Digitized by Google

Paid for abuse, and oft-repeated lies,
In daily prints, the thoroughfare of news,
For party schemes made interest, under cloak
Of liberty, and right, and public weal:
In holy conclave, bishops spoke of tithes,
And of the awful wickedness of men:
Intoxicate with sceptres, diademe,
And universal rule, and panting hard
For fame, heroes were leading on the brave
To battle; men, in science deeply read,
And academic theory, foretold
Improvements vast: and learned sceptics proved
That earth should with eternity endure;
Concluding madly that there was no God.

No sign of change appeared; to every man
That day seemed as the past. From noontide path
The sun looked gloriously on earth, and all
Her scenes of giddy folly smiled secure.
When suddenly, alas, fair Earth! the sun
Was wrapt in darkness, and his beams returned
Up to the throne of God; and over all
The earth came night, moonless and starless night.
Nature stood still; the seas and rivers stood,
And all the winds; and every living thing.
The cataract, that like a giant wroth,
Rushed down impetuously, as seized, at once,
By sudden frost with all his hoary locks,
Stood still: and beasts of every kind stood still.
A deep and dreadful silence reigned alone!
Hope died in every breast; and on all men
Came fear and trembling: none to his neighbour spoke
Husband thought not of wife; nor of her child
The mother; nor friend of friend; nor foe of foe.
In horrible suspense all mortals stood;
And as they stood, and listened, chariots were heard
Rolling in heaven: revealed in flaming fire,
The angel of God appeared in stature vast,
Blazing, and, lifting up his hand on high,
By Him that lives for ever, swore, that Time
Should be no more.—Throughout, creation heard
And sighed; all rivers, lakes, and seas, and woods,
Desponding waste, and cultivated vale;
Wild cave, and ancient hill, and every rock
Sighed: earth, arrested in her wonted path,
As ox struck by the lifted axe, when nought
Was feared, in all her entrails deeply groaned.
A universal crash was heard, as if
The ribs of nature broke, and all her dark
Foundations failed: and deadly paleness sat
On every face of man, and every heart
Grew chill, and every knee his fellow smote.
None spoke, none stirred, none wept; for horror held
All motionless, and fettered every tongue.
Again, o'er all the nations silence fell:
And, in the heavens, robed in excessive light,
That drove the thick of darkness far aside,
And walked with penetration keen through all
The abodes of men, another angel stood,
And blew the trump of God.—Awake, ye dead!
Be changed, ye living! and put on the garb
Of immortality! Awake! arise!
The God of judgment comes. This said the voice:
And Silence, from eternity that slept
Beyond the sphere of the creating Word,
And all the noise of Time, awakened, heard.
Heaven heard, and earth, and farthest hell through all
Her regions of despair: the ear of Death
Heard, and the sleep that for so long a night
Pressed on his leaden eyelids, fled: and all
The dead awoke, and all the living changed.

Old men, that on their staff, bending had leaned,
Crazy and frail; or sat, benumbed with age,
In weary listlessness, ripe for the grave,
Felt through their sluggish veins, and withered limbs,
New vigour flow: the wrinkled face grew smooth;
Upon the head, that time had razored bare,
Rose bushy locks; and as his son, in prime
Of strength and youth, the aged father stood.
Changing herself, the mother saw her son
Grow up, and suddenly put on the form
Of manhood: and the wretch, that begging sat
Limbless, deformed, at corner of the way,
Unmindful of his crutch, in joint and limb
Arose complete: and he that on the bed
Of mortal sickness, worn with sore distress,
Lay breathing forth his soul to death, felt now
The tide of life and vigour rushing back;
And looking up beheld his weeping wife,
And daughter fond, that o'er him, bending, stooped
To close his eyes: the frantic madman too,
In whose confused brain, reason had lost
Her way, long driven at random to and fro,
Grew sober, and his manacles fell off.
The newly sheeted corpse arose, and stared
On those who dressed it: and the coffined dead,
That men were bearing to the tomb, awoke,
And mingled with their friends: and armies, which
The trump surprised, met in the furious shock
Of battle, saw the bleeding ranks, new fallen,
Rise up at once, and to their ghastly cheeks
Return the stream of life in healthy flow.
And as the anatomist, with all his band
Of rude disciples, o'er the subject hung,
And impolitely hewed his way through bones
And muscles of the sacred human form,
Exposing barbarously to wanton gaze,
The mysteries of nature—joint embraced
His kindred joint, the wounded flesh grew up,
And suddenly the injured man awoke,
Among their hands, and stood arrayed complete
In immortality—forgiving scarce
The insult offered to his clay in death.

That was the hour, long wished for by the good,
Of universal Jubilee to all
The sons of bondage; from the oppressor's hand
The scourge of violence fell; and from his back,
Healed of its stripes, the burden of the slave.

The youth of great religious soul—who sat
Retired in voluntary loneliness,
In reverie extravagant now wrapt,
Or poring now on book of ancient date,
With filial awe; and dipping oft his pen
To write immortal things; to pleasure deaf.

Digitized by Google

And joys of common men; working his way
With mighty energy, not uninspired,
Through all the mines of thought; reckless of pain,
And weariness, and wasted health; the scoff
Of pride, or growl of Envy's hellish brood;
While Fancy, voyaged far beyond the bounds
Of years revealed, heard many a future age,
With commendation loud, repeat his name—
False prophetess! the day of change was come—
Behind the shadow of eternity,
He saw his visions set of earthly fame;
For ever set: nor sighed, while through his veins
In lighter current ran immortal life;
His form renewed to undecaying health;
To undecaying health his soul, erewhile
Not tuned amiss to God's eternal praise.

All men in field and city; by the way;
On land or sea; lolling in gorgeous hall,
Or plying at the oar; crawling in rags
Obscure, or dazzling in embroidered gold;
Alone, in companies, at home, abroad;
In wanton merriment surprised and taken;
Or kneeling reverently in act of prayer;
Or cursing recklessly, or uttering lies;
Or lapping greedily from slander's cup
The blood of reputation; or between
Friendships and brotherhoods devising strife;
Or plotting to defile a neighbour's bed;
In duel met with dagger of revenge;
Or casting on the widow's heritage
The eye of covetousness; or with full hand
On mercy's noiseless errands, unobserved,
Administering; or meditating fraud
And deeds of horrid barbarous intent;
In full pursuit of unexperienced hope,
Fluttering along the flowery path of youth;
Or steeped in disappointment's bitterness—
The fevered cup that guilt must ever drink,
When parched and fainting on the road of ill;
Beggar and king, the clown and haughty lord;
The venerable sage, and empty fop;
The ancient matron, and the rosy bride;
The virgin chaste, and shrivelled harlot vile;
The savage fierce, and man of science mild;
The good and evil, in a moment, all
Were changed, corruptible to incorrupt,
And mortal to immortal, ne'er to change.

And now, descending from the bowers of heaven,
Soft airs o'er all the earth, spreading, were heard,
And Hallelujahs sweet, the harmony
Of righteous souls that came to repossess
Their long neglected bodies: and anon
Upon the ear fell horribly the sound
Of cursing, and the yells of damned despair,
Uttered by felon spirits that the trump
Had summoned from the burning glooms of hell,
To put their bodies on—reserved for woe.

Now starting up among the living, changed,
Appeared innumerous the risen dead.
Each particle of dust was claimed: the turf,
For ages trod beneath the careless foot
Of men, rose organized in human form;
The monumental stones were rolled away;
The doors of death were opened; and in the dark
And loathsome vault, and silent charnel house,
Moving, were heard the mouldered bones that sought
Their proper place. Instinctive every soul
Flew to its clayey part: from grass-grown mould
The nameless spirit took its ashes up,
Reanimate: and, merging from beneath
The flattered marble, undistinguished rose
The great—nor heeded once the lavish rhyme,
And costly pomp of sculptured garnish vain.
The Memphian mummy, that from age to age
Descending, bought and sold a thousand times,
In hall of curious antiquary stowed,
Wrapt in mysterious weeds, the wondrous theme
Of many an erring tale, shook off its rags
And the brown son of Egypt stood beside
The European, his last purchaser.
In vale remote the hermit rose, surprised
At crowds that rose around him, where he thought
His slumbers had been single: and the bard,
Who fondly covenanted with his friend
To lay his bones beneath the sighing bough
Of some old lonely tree, rising, was pressed
By multitudes, that claimed their proper dust
From the same spot: and he that, richly hearsed
With gloomy garniture of purchased woe,
Embalmed, in princely sepulchre was laid,
Apart from vulgar men, built nicely round
And round by the proud heir, who blushed to think
His father's lordly clay should ever mix
With peasant dust—saw by his side awake
The clown, that long had slumbered in his arms.

The family tomb, to whose devouring mouth
Descended sire and son, age after age,
In long unbroken hereditary line,
Poured forth at once the ancient father rude,
And all his offspring of a thousand years.
Refreshed from sweet repose, awoke the man
Of charitable life—awoke and sung:
And from his prison house, slowly and sad,
As if unsatisfied with holding near
Communion with the earth, the miser drew
His carcass forth, and gnashed his teeth, and howled,
Unsolaced by his gold and silver then.
From simple stone in lonely wilderness,
That hoary lay, o'er-lettered by the hand
Of oft-frequenting pilgrim, who had taught
The willow tree to weep at morn and even
Over the sacred spot—the martyr saint
To song of seraph harp triumphant rose,
Well pleased that he had suffered to the death.
"The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,"
As sung the bard of Nature's hand anointed,
In whose capacious giant numbers rolled
The passions of old Time, fell lumbering down.
All cities fell, and every work of man,
And gave their portion forth of human dust,
Touched by the mortal finger of decay.
Tree, herb, and flower, and every fowl of heaven,
And fish, and animal, the wild and tame,
Forthwith dissolving, crumbled into dust.

Alas, ye sons of strength! ye ancient oaks!
Ye holy pines! ye elms! and cedars tall!

Digitized by Google

Like towers of God, far seen on Carmel mount,
Or Lebanon, that waved your boughs on high,
And laughed at all the winds—your hour was come!
Ye laurels, ever green! and bays, that wont
To wreathe the patriot and the poet's brow;
Ye myrtle bowers! and groves of sacred shade!
Where Music ever sung, and Zephyr fanned
His airy wing, wet with the dews of life,
And Spring for ever smiled, the fragrant haunt
Of Love, and Health, and ever dancing Mirth—
Alas! how suddenly your verdure died,
And ceased your minstrelsy, to sing no more.
Ye flowers of beauty! penciled by the hand
Of God, who annually renewed your birth,
To gem the virgin robes of Nature chaste,
Ye smiling featured daughters of the Sun!
Fairer than queenly bride, by Jordan's stream
Leading your gentle lives, retired, unseen;
Or on the sainted cliffs of Zion hill,
Wandering, and holding with the heavenly dews,
In holy revelry, your nightly loves,
Watched by the stars, and offering every morn
Your incense grateful both to God and man,
Ye lovely gentle things! alas, no spring
Shall ever wake you now! ye withered all,
All in a moment drooped, and on your roots
The grasp of everlasting winter seized.
Children of song! ye birds that dwelt in air,
And stole your notes from angels' lyres, and first
In levee of the morn, with eulogy
Ascending, hailed the advent of the dawn;
Or, roosted on the pensive evening bough,
In melancholy numbers sung the day
To rest, your little wings, failing, dissolved
In middle air, and on your harmony
Perpetual silence fell. Nor did his wing,
That sailed in track of gods sublime, and fanned
The sun, avail the eagle then; quick smitten,
His plumage withered in meridian height,
And, in the valley, sunk the lordly bird,
A clod of clay. Before the ploughman fell
His steers, and mid-way the furrow left:
The shepherd saw his flocks around him turn
To dust; beneath his rider fell the steed
To ruins: and the lion in his den
Grew cold and stiff, or in the furious chase,
With timid fawn, that scarcely missed his paws.
On earth no living thing was seen but men,
New changed, or rising from the opening tomb.

Athens, and Rome, and Babylon, and Tyre,
And she that sat on Thames, queen of the seas!
Cities once famed on earth, convulsed through all
Their mighty ruins, threw their millions forth.
Palmyra's dead, where Desolation sat,
From age to age, well pleased, in solitude
And silence, save when traveller's foot, or owl
Of night, or fragment mouldering down to dust,
Broke faintly on his desert ear, awoke.
And Salem, holy city, where the Prince
Of Life, by death, a second life secured
To man, and with him from the grave, redeemed,
A chosen number brought, to retinue
His great ascent on high, and give sure pledge
That death was foiled,—her generations now
Gave up, of kings, and priests, and Pharisees;
Nor even the Sadducee, who fondly said
No morn of Resurrection ere should come,
Could sit the summons: to his ear did reach
The trumpet's voice; and ill prepared for what
He oft had proved should never be, he rose
Reluctantly, and on his face began
To burn eternal shame. The cities too,
Of old ensepulchred beneath the flood,
Or deeply slumbering under mountains huge,
That Earthquake—servant of the wrath of God—
Had on their wicked population thrown,
And marts of busy trade, long ploughed and sown,
By history unrecorded, or the song
Of bard, yet not forgotten their wickedness
In heaven—poured forth their ancient multitudes,
That vainly wished their sleep had never broke.
From battle-fields, where men by millions met
To murder each his fellow, and make sport
To kings and heroes—things long since forgot—
Innumerous armies rose, unbannered all,
Unpanoplied, unpraised; nor found a prince,
Or general then, to answer for their crimes.
The hero's slaves, and all the scarlet troops
Of antichrist, and all that fought for rule—
Many high-sounding names, familiar once
On earth, and praised exceedingly; but now
Familiar most in hell—their dungeon fit,
Where they may war eternally with God's
Almighty thunderbolts, and win them pangs
Of keener woe—saw, as they sprung to life,
The widow, and the orphan ready stand,
And helpless virgin, ravished in their sport,
To plead against them at the coming Doom.
The Roman legions, boasting once, how loud!
Of liberty; and fighting bravely o'er
The torrid and the frigid zone, the sands
Of burning Egypt, and the frozen hills
Of snowy Albion, to make mankind
Their thralls, untaught that he who made or kept
A slave, could ne'er himself be truly free—
That morning gathered up their dust, which lay
Wide scattered over half the globe: nor saw
Their eagled banners then. Sennacherib's hosts,
Embattled once against the sons of God,
With insult bold, quick as the noise of mirth
And revelry, sunk in their drunken camp,
When death's dark angel, at the dead of night,
Their vitals touched, and made each pulse stand still—
Awoke in sorrow: and the multitudes
Of Gog, and all the fated crew that warred
Against the chosen saints, in the last days,
At Armageddon, when the Lord came down,
Mustering his hosts on Israel's holy hills,
And from the treasures of his snow and hail
Rained terror, and confusion rained, and death,
And gave to all the beasts, and fowls of heaven
Of captains' flesh, and blood of men of war,
A feast of many days—revived, and, doomed
To second death, stood in Hamonah's vale.

Nor yet did all that fell in battle, rise
That day to wailing: here and there were seen
The patriot bands, that from his guilty throne
The despot tore, unshackled nations, made
The prince respect the people's laws, drove back
The wave of proud invasion, and rebuked
The frantic fury of the multitude,
Rebelled, and fought and fell for liberty

Digitized by Google

Right understood—true heroes in the speech
Of heaven, where words express the thoughts of him
Who speaks—not undistinguished these, though few,
That morn arose, with joy and melody.
All woke—the north and south gave up their dead:
The caravan, that in mid-journey sunk,
With all its merchandise, expected long,
And long forgot, ingulphed beneath the tide
Of death, that the wild spirit of the winds
Swept, in his wrath, along the wilderness,
In the wide desert woke, and saw all calm
Around, and populous with risen men:
Nor of his relics thought the pilgrim then,
Nor merchant of his silks and spiceries.

And he—far voyaging from home and friends,
Too curious, with a mortal eye to peep
Into the secrets of the Pole, forbid
By nature, whom fierce winter seized, and froze
To death, and wrapped in winding sheet of ice,
And sung the requiem of his shivering ghost
With the loud organ of his mighty winds,
And on his memory threw the snow of ages—
Felt the long absent warmth of life return,
And shook the frozen mountain from his bed.

All rose, of every age, of every clime:
Adam and Eve, the great progenitors
Of all mankind, fair as they seemed that morn
When first they met in paradise, unfallen,
Uncursed—from ancient slumber broke, where once
Euphrates rolled his stream; and by them stood,
In stature equal, and in soul as large,
Their last posterity—though poets sung,
And sages proved them far degenerate.

Blessed sight! not unobserved by angels, or
Unpraised—that day 'mong men of every tribe
And hue, from those who drank of Tenglio's stream,
To those who nightly saw the hermit cross,
In utmost south retired,—rising, were seen
The fair and ruddy sons of Albion's land—
How glad!—not those who travelled far, and sailed
To purchase human flesh; or wreathe the yoke
Of vassalage on savage liberty;
Or suck large fortune from the sweat of slaves;
Or with refined knavery to cheat,
Politely villanous, untutored men
Out of their property; or gather shells,
Intaglios rude, old pottery, and store
Of mutilated gods of stone, and scraps
Of barbarous epitaphs defaced, to be
Among the learned the theme of warm debate,
And infinite conjecture, sagely wrong!
But those, denied to self, to earthly fame
Denied, and earthly wealth, who kindred left,
And home, and ease, and all the cultured joys,
Conveniences, and delicate delights
Of ripe society; in the great cause
Of man's salvation greatly valorous,
The warriors of Messiah, messengers
Of peace, and light, and life, whose eye, unscaled,
Saw up the path of immortality,
Far into bliss—saw men, immortal men,
Wide wandering from the way; eclipsed in night,
Dark, moonless, moral night; living like beasts;
Like beasts descending to the grave, untaught
Of life to come, unsanctified, unsaved:
Who strong, though seeming weak; who warlike, though
Unarmed with bow and sword; appearing mad,
Though sounder than the schools alone ere made
The doctor's head; devote to God and truth,
And sworn to man's eternal weal—beyond
Repentance sworn, or thought of turning back;
And casting far behind all earthly care,
All countryships, all national regards
And enmities; all narrow bournes of state
And selfish policy; beneath their feet
Treading all fear of opposition down;
All fear of danger; of reproach all fear,
And evil tongues;—went forth, from Britain went
A noiseless band of heavenly soldiery,
From out the armoury of God equipped,
Invincible, to conquer sin; to blow
The trump of freedom in the despot's ear;
To tell the bruted slave his manhood high,
His birthright liberty, and in his hand
To put the writ of manumission, signed
By God's own signature: to drive away
From earth the dark infernal legionry
Of superstition, ignorance, and hell:
High on the pagan hills, where Satan sat
Encamped, and o'er the subject kingdoms threw
Perpetual night, to plant Immanuel's cross,
The ensign of the Gospel, blazing round
Immortal truth; and in the wilderness
Of human waste to sow eternal life;
And from the rock, where sin, with horrid yell,
Devoured its victims unredeemed, to raise
The melody of grateful hearts to Heaven;
To falsehood, truth; to pride, humility;
To insult, meekness; pardon, to revenge;
To stubborn prejudice, unwearied zeal:
To censure, unaccusing minds; to stripes,
Long suffering: to want of all things, hope;
To death, assured faith of life to come,
Opposing—these, great worthies, rising, shone
Through all the tribes and nations of mankind,
Like Hesper, glorious once among the stars
Of twilight; and around them, flocking, stood,
Arrayed in white, the people they had saved.

Great Ocean too, that morning, thou, the call
Of restitution heardst, and reverently
To the last trumpet's voice in silence listened!
Great Ocean! strongest of creation's sons!
Unconquerable, unreposed, untired;
That rolled the wild, profound, eternal bass,
In Nature's anthem, and made music, such
As pleased the ear of God. Original,
Unmarred, unfaded work of Deity;
And unburlesqued by mortal's puny skill.
From age to age enduring and unchanged:
Majestical, inimitable, vast,
Loud uttering satire day and night on each
Succeeding race, and little pompous work
Of man. Unfallen, religious, holy sea!
Thou bowedst thy glorious head to none, fearedst none,
Heardst none, to none didst honour, but to God

Digitized by Google

Thy maker—only worthy to receive
Thy great obeisance. Undiscovered sea!
Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
And secret haunts, unfathomably deep
Beneath all visible retired, none went,
And came again, to tell the wonders there.
Tremendous sea! what time thou lifted up
Thy waves on high, and with thy winds and storms
Strange pastime took, and shook thy mighty sides
Indignantly—the pride of navies fell;
Beyond the arm of help, unheard, unseen,
Sunk friend and foe, with all their wealth and war;
And on thy shores, men of a thousand tribes,
Polite and barbarous, trembling stood, amazed,
Confounded, terrified, and thought vast thoughts
Of ruin, boundlessness, omnipotence,
Infinitude, eternity; and thought
And wondered still, and grasped, and grasped, and grasped
Again—beyond her reach exerting all
The soul to take thy great idea in,
To comprehend imcomprehensible;
And wondered more, and felt their littleness.
Self-purifying, unpolluted sea!
Lover unchangeable! thy faithful breast
For ever heaving to the lovely moon,
That like a shy and holy virgin, robed
In saintly white, walked nightly in the heavens.
And to thy everlasting serenade
Gave gracious audience; nor was wooed in vain.
That morning, thou, that slumbered not before,
Nor slept, great Ocean! laid thy waves to rest,
And hushed thy mighty minstrelsy. No breath
Thy deep composure stirred, no fin, no oar;
Like beauty newly dead, so calm, so still,
So lovely, thou, beneath the light that fell
From angel-chariots sentinelled on high,
Reposed, and listened, and saw thy living change,
Thy dead arise. Charybdis listened, and Scylla,
And savage Euxine, on the Thracian beach,
Lay motionless: and every battle ship
Stood still; and every ship of merchandise,
And all that sailed, of every name, stood still.
Even as the ship of war, full fledged and swift,
Like some fierce bird of prey, bore on her foe,
Opposing with as fell intent, the wind
Fell withered from her wings, that idly hung;
The stormy bullet, by the cannon thrown
Uncivilly against the heavenly face
Of men, half sped, sunk harmlessly, and all
Her loud, uncircumcised, tempestuous crew,
How ill prepared to meet their God! were changed,
Unchangeable—the pilot at the helm
Was changed, and the rough captain, while he mouthed
The huge enormous oath. The fisherman,
That in his boat expectant watched his lines,
Or mended on the shore his net, and sung,
Happy in thoughtlessness, some careless air,
Heard Time depart, and felt the sudden change.
In solitary deep, far out from land,
Or steering from the port with many a cheer,
Or while returning from long voyage, fraught
With lusty wealth, rejoicing to have escaped
The dangerous main and plagues of foreign climes,
The merchant quaffed his native air, refreshed,
And saw his native hills in the sun's light
Serenely rise, and thought of meetings glad,
And many days of ease and honour spent
Among his friends—unwarned man! even then
The knell of Time broke on his reverie,
And in the twinkling of an eye his hopes,
All earthly, perished all. As sudden rose,
From out their watery beds, the Ocean's dead,
Renewed, and on the unstirring billows stood,
From pole to pole, thick covering all the sea;
Of every nation blent, and every age.

Wherever slept one grain of human dust,
Essential organ of a human soul,
Wherever tossed—obedient to the call
Of God's omnipotence, it hurried on
To meet its fellow particles, revived,
Rebuilt, in union indestructible.
No atom of his spoils remained to Death.
From his strong arm by stronger arm released,
Immortal now in soul and body both,
Beyond his reach, stood all the sons of men,
And saw behind his valley lie unfeared.

O Death! with what an eye of desperate lust,
From out thy emptied vaults, thou then didst look
After the risen multitudes of all
Mankind! Ah, thou hadst been the terror long,
And murderer of all of woman born.
None could escape thee! In thy dungeon house,
Where darkness dwelt, and putrid loathsomeness,
And fearful silence, villanously still,
And all of horrible and deadly name,—
Thou satt'st from age to age, insatiate,
And drank the blood of men, and gorged their flesh,
And with thy iron teeth didst grind their bones
To powder—treading out beneath thy feet
Their very names and memories: the blood
Of nations could not slake thy parched throat.
No bribe could buy thy favour for an hour,
Or mitigate thy ever cruel rage
For human prey. Gold, beauty, virtue, youth;
Even helpless swaddled innocency failed
To soften thy heart of stone: the infant's blood
Pleased well thy taste—and while the mother wept,
Bereaved by thee, lonely and waste in woe,
Thy ever grinding jaws devoured her too.

Each son of Adam's family beheld,
Where'er he turned, whatever path of life
He trode, thy goblin form behind him stand,
Like trusty old assassin, in his aim
Steady and sure as eye of destiny,
With scythe, and dart, and strength invincible
Equipped, and ever menacing his life.
He turned aside, he drowned himself in sleep
In wine, in pleasure; travelled, voyaged, sought
Receipts for health from all he met; betook
To business speculate; retired; returned
Again to active life; again retired;
Returned; retired again; prepared to die,
Talked of thy nothingness; conversed of life
To come; laughed at his fears; filled up the cup
Drank deep; refrained, filled up; refrained again;
Planned; built him round with splendour, won applause:

Digitized by Google

Made large alliances with men and things;
Read deep in science and philosophy,
To fortify his soul; heard lectures prove
The present ill, and future good; observed
His pulse beat regular; extended hope;
Thought, dissipated thought, and thought again;
Indulged, abstained, and tried a thousand schemes,
To ward thy blow, or hide thee from his eye;
But still thy gloomy terrors, dipped in sin,
Before him frowned, and withered all his joy.
Still, feared and hated thing, thy ghostly shape
Stood in his avenues of fairest hope;
Unmannerly, and uninvited, crept
Into his haunts of most select delight:
Still on his halls of mirth, and banqueting,
And revelry, thy shadowy hand was seen
Writing thy name of—Death. Vile worm, that gnawed
The root of all his happiness terrene; the gall
Of all his sweet; the thorn of every rose
Of earthly bloom; cloud of his noon-day sky;
Frost of his spring; sigh of his loudest laugh;
Dark spot on every form of loveliness;
Rank smell amidst his rarest spiceries;
Harsh dissonance of all his harmony;
Reserve of every promise, and the if
Of all to-morrows—now beyond thy vale
Stood all the ransomed multitude of men,
Immortal all; and in their visions saw
Thy visage grim no more. Great payment day!
Of all thou ever conquered, none was left
In thy unpeopled realms, so populous once.
He, at whose girdle hangs the keys of death
And life—not bought but with the blood of Him
Who wears, the eternal Son of God, that morn
Dispelled the cloud that sat so long, so thick,
So heavy o'er thy vale; opened all thy doors,
Unopened before, and set thy prisoners free.
Vain was resistance, and to follow vain.
In thy unveiled caves, and solitudes
Of dark and dismal emptiness, thou satt'st,
Rolling thy hollow eyes: disabled thing!
Helpless, despised, unpitied, and unfeared,
Like some fallen tyrant, chained in sight of all
The people: from thee dropped thy pointless dart;
Thy terrors withered all; thy ministers,
Annihilated, fell before thy face;
And on thy maw eternal hunger seized.

Nor yet, sad monster! wast thou left alone.
In thy dark dens some phantoms still remained—
Ambition, Vanity, and earthly Fame;
Swollen Ostentation, meagre Avarice,
Mad Superstition, smooth Hypocrisy,
And Bigotry intolerant, and Fraud,
And wilful Ignorance, and sullen Pride;
Hot Controversy, and the subtile ghost
Of Vain Philosophy, and worldly Hope,
And sweet-lipped hollow-hearted Flattery—
All these, great personages once on earth,
And not unfollowed, nor unpraised, were left
Thy ever-unredeemed, and with thee driven
To Erebus, through whose uncheered wastes,
Thou mayest chase them, with thy broken scythe
Fetching vain strokes, to all eternity,
Unsatisfied, as men who, in the days
Of Time, their unsubstantial forms pursued.

BOOK VIII.

ANALYSIS.

Description of the world assembled for final judgment: all former distinctions equalized; all waiting in expectation; vice and virtue, good and bad, redeemed and unredeemed, were now the only distinctions among men.

An holy radiance shone on all countenances and revealed the inward state and feeling, the "index of the soul." On the wicked was depicted unutterable despair; and on the righteous, "in measure equal to the soul's advance in virtue," it became the "lustre of the face."

Various classes of the assembly are particularized; the man of earthly fame, the mighty reasoner, the theorist, the recluse, the bigoted theologian, the indolent, the sceptic, the follower of fashion, the duteous wife, the lunatic, the dishonest judge, the seducer, the duellist and suicide, the hypocrite, the slanderer, the false priest, the envious man.

The word of God was not properly believed by any of the wicked; the necessary fruit of faith being "truth, temperance, meekness, holiness and love."

Reanimated now, and dressed in robes
Of everlasting wear, in the last pause
Of expectation, stood the human race;
Buoyant in air, or covering shore and sea,
From east to west, thick as the eared grain
In golden autumn waved, from field to field,
Profuse, by Nilus' fertile wave, while yet
Earth was, and men were in her valleys seen.

Still all was calm in heaven; nor yet appeared
The Judge: nor aught appeared, save here and there,
On wing of golden plumage borne at will,
A curious angel, that from out the skies,
Now glanced a look on man, and then retired
As calm was all on earth: the ministers
Of God's unsparing vengeance waited, still
Unbid: no sun, no moon, no star gave light:
A blest and holy radiance, travelled far
From day original, fell on the face
Of men, and every countenance revealed;
Unpleasant to the bad, whose visages
Had lost all guise of seeming happiness,
With which on earth such pains they took to hide
Their misery in. On their grim features, now
The plain unvisored index of the soul,
The true untampered witness of the heart,
No smile of hope, no look of vanity
Beseeching for applause, was seen; no scowl
Of self-important, all-despising pride,
That once upon the poor and needy fell,
Like winter on the unprotected flower,
Withering their very being to decay.
No jesting mirth, no wanton leer was seen:

Digitized by Google

No sullen lower of braggart fortitude
Defying pain; nor anger, nor revenge;
But fear instead, and terror and remorse;
And chief one passion to its answering shaped
The features of the damned, and in itself
Summed all the rest—unutterable despair.

What on the righteous shone of foreign light,
Was all redundant day they needed not.
For, as by nature, Sin is dark, and loves
The dark, still hiding from itself in gloom;
And in the darkest hell, is still itself
The darkest hell, and the severest woe,
Where all is woe: so Virtue, ever fair!
Doth by a sympathy as strong as binds
Two equal hearts, well pleased in wedded love,
For ever seek the light, for ever seek
All fair and lovely things, all beauteous forms,
All images of excellence and truth;
And from her own essential being, pure
As flows the fount of life that spirits drink,
Doth to herself give light, nor from her beams,
As native to her as her own existence,
Can be divorced, nor of her glory shorn,—
Which now from every feature of the just,
Divinely rayed; yet not from all alike:
In measure equal to the soul's advance
In virtue, was the lustre of the face.

It was a strange assembly: none of all
That congregation vast could recollect
Aught like it in the history of man.
No badge of outward state was seen; no mark
Of age, or rank, or national attire;
Or robe professional, or air of trade.
Untitled stood the man that once was called
My lord, unserved, unfollowed; and the man
Of tithes, right reverend in the dialect
Of Time addressed, ungowned, unbeneficed,
Uncorpulent; nor now from him, who bore,
With ceremonious gravity of step,
And face of borrowed holiness o'erlaid,
The ponderous book before the awful priest,
And opened and shut the pulpit's sacred gates
In style of wonderful observancy,
And reverence excessive, in the beams
Of sacerdotal splendour lost, or if
Observed, comparison ridiculous scarce
Could save the little, pompous, humble man
From laughter of the people—not from him
Could be distinguished then the priest untithed.
None levees held, those marts where princely smiles
Were sold for flattery, and obeisance mean,
Unfit from man to man; none came, or went;
None wished to draw attention, none was poor,
None rich; none young, none old, deformed none;
None sought for place, or favour; none had aught
To give, none could receive; none ruled, none served;
No king, no subject was; unscutcheoned all,
Uncrowned, unplumed, unhelmed, unpedigreed;
Unlaced, uncoroneted, unbestarred.
Nor countryman was seen, nor citizen;
Republican, nor humble advocate
Of monarchy; nor idle worshipper,
Nor beaded papist, nor Mahometan;
Episcopalian none, nor presbyter;
Nor Lutheran, nor Calvanist, nor Jew,
Nor Greek, nor sectary of any name.
Nor of those persons that loud title bore—
Most high and mighty, most magnificent;
Most potent, most august, most worshipful,
Most eminent; words of great pomp, that pleased
The ear of vanity, and made the worms
Of earth mistake themselves for gods—could one
Be seen, to claim these phrases obsolete.

It was a congregation vast of men;
Of unappendaged, and unvarnished men;
Of plain, unceremonious human beings,
Of all but moral characters bereaved.
His vice, or virtue now to each remained
Alone. All else with their grave-clothes men had
Put off, as badges worn by mortal, not
Immortal man; alloy that could not pass
The scrutiny of Death's refining fires;
Dust of Time's wheels, by multitudes pursued
Of fools that shouted—gold! fair painted fruit,
At which the ambitious idiot jumped, while men
Of wiser mood immortal harvests reaped;
Weeds of the human garden, sprung from earth's
Adulterate soil, unfit to be transplanted,
Though by the moral botanist too oft
For plants of heavenly seed mistaken, and nursed;
Mere chaff, that Virtue, when she rose from earth
And waved her wings to gain her native heights,
Drove from the verge of being, leaving Vice
No mask to hide her in; base-born of Time,
In which God claimed no property, nor had
Prepared for them a place in heaven, or hell.
Yet did these vain distinctions, now forgot,
Bulk largely in the filmy eye of Time,
And were exceeding fair; and lured to death
Immortal souls. But they were past; for all
Ideal now was past; reality
Alone remained; and good and bad, redeemed
And unredeemed, distinguished sole the sons
Of men. Each to his proper self reduced,
And undisguised, was what his seeming showed.

The man of earthly fame, whom common men
Made boast of having seen—who scarce could pass
The ways of Time, for eager crowds that pressed
To do him homage, and pursued his ear
With endless praise, for deeds unpraised above,
And yoked their brutal natures, honoured much
To drag his chariot on—unnoticed stood,
With none to praise him, none to flatter there.

Blushing and dumb, that morning, too, was seen
The mighty reasoner; he who deeply searched
The origin of things, and talked of good
And evil much, of causes and effects,
Of mind and matter, contradicting all
That went before him, and himself, the while,
The laughing-stock of angels; diving far
Below his depth, to fetch reluctant proof,
That he himself was mad and wicked too,
When proud and ignorant man, he meant to prove,
That God had made the universe amiss,
And sketched a better plan. Ah! foolish sage!
He could not trust the word of Heaven, nor see
The light which from the Bible blazed—that lamp
Which God threw from his palace down to earth,
To guide his wandering children home—yet leaned

Digitized by Google

His cautious faith on speculations wild,
And visionary theories absurd,
Prodigiously, deliriously absurd,
Compared with which, the most erroneous flight
That poet ever took when warm with wine,
Was moderate conjecturing:—he saw,
Weighed in the balance of eternity,
His lore how light, and wished, too late, that he
Had staid at home, and learned to know himself,
And done, what peasants did—disputed less,
And more obeyed. Nor less he grieved his time
Misspent, the man of curious research,
Who travelled far through lands of hostile clime,
And dangerous inhabitant, to fix
The bounds of empires past, and ascertain
The burial-place of heroes never born;
Despising present things, and future too,
And groping in the dark unsearchable
Of finished years:—by dreary ruins seen,
And dungeons damp, and vaults of ancient waste,
With spade and mattock, delving deep to raise
Old vases and dismembered idols rude;
With matchless perseverance spelling out
Words without sense. Poor man! he clapped his hands
Enraptured, when he found a manuscript
That spoke of pagan gods; and yet forgot
The God who made the sea and sky—alas!
Forgot that trifling was a sin; stored much
Of dubious stuff, but laid no treasure up
In heaven; on mouldered columns scratched his name,
But ne'er inscribed it in the book of life.

Unprofitable seemed, and unapproved,
That day, the sullen, self-vindictive life
Of the recluse: with crucifixes hung,
And spells, and rosaries, and wooden saints,
Like one of reason reft, he journeyed forth,
In show of miserable poverty,
And chose to beg, as if to live on sweat
Of other men, had promised great reward;
On his own flesh inflicted cruel wounds,
With naked foot embraced the ice, by the hour
Said mass, and did most grievous penance vile:
And then retired to drink the filthy cup
Of secret wickedness, and fabricate
All lying wonders, by the untaught received
For revelations new. Deluded wretch!
Did he not know, that the most Holy One
Required a cheerful life and holy heart?

Most disappointed in that crowd of men,
The man of subtle controversy stood,
The bigot theologian—in minute
Distinctions skilled, and doctrines unreduced
To practice; in debate how loud! how long.
How dexterous! in christian love, how cold!
His vain conceits were orthodox alone.
The immutable and heavenly truth, revealed
By God, was nought to him: he had an art,
A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips
Of truth speak falsehood; to his liking turned
The meaning of the text; made trifles seem
The marrow of salvation; to a word,
A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear,
And to the eye so many letters showed,
But did no more—gave value infinite;
Proved still his reasoning best, and his belief,
Though propped on fancies, wild as madmen's dreams,
Most rational, most scriptural, most sound;
With mortal heresy denouncing all
Who in his arguments could see no force.
On points of faith too fine for human sight,
And never understood in heaven, he placed
His everlasting hope, undoubting placed,
And died: and when he opened his ear, prepared
To hear, beyond the grave, the minstrelsy
Of bliss—he heard, alas! the wail of woe.
He proved all creeds false but his own, and found
At last, his own most false—most false, because
He spent his time to prove all others so.

O love destroying, cursed Bigotry!
Cursed in heaven, but cursed more in hell,
Where millions curse thee, and must ever curse!
Religion's most abhorred! perdition's most
Forlorn! God's most abandoned! hell's most damned!
The infidel, who turned his impious war
Against the walls of Zion, on the rock
Of ages built, and higher than the clouds,
Sinned, and received his due reward; but she
Within her walls sinned more: of ignorance
Begot, her daughter, Persecution, walked
The earth, from age to age, and drank the blood
Of saints, with horrid relish drank the blood
Of God's peculiar children—and was drunk;
And in her drunkenness dreamed of doing good.
The supplicating hand of innocence,
That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath
The lion pause—the groans of suffering most
Severe, were nought to her: she laughed at groans,
No music pleased her more; and no repast
So sweet to her as blood of men redeemed
By blood of Christ. Ambition's self, though mad,
And nursed on human gore, with her compared
Was merciful. Nor did she always rage:
She had some hours of meditation set
Apart, wherein she to her study went;
The Inquisition, model most complete
Of perfect wickedness, where deeds were done
Deeds! let them ne'er be named,—and sat and planned
Deliberately, and with most musing pains,
How, to extremest thrill of agony,
The flesh, and blood, and souls of holy men,
Her victims, might be wrought; and when she saw
New tortures of her labouring fancy born,
She leaped for joy, and made great haste to try
Their force—well pleased to hear a deeper groan.

But now her day of mirth was past, and come
Her day to weep; her day of bitter groans,
And sorrow unbemoaned; the day of grief,
And wrath retributary poured in full
On all that took her part. The man of sin,
The mystery of iniquity, her friend
Sincere, who pardoned sin, unpardoned still,
And in the name of God blasphemed, and did
All wicked, all abominable things,
Most abject stood that day, by devils hissed,
And by the looks of those he murdered, scorched:
And plagued with inward shame that on his cheek
Burned, while his votaries who left the earth,

Digitized by Google

Secure of bliss, around him undeceived
Stood, undeceivable till then; and knew,
Too late, him fallible, themselves accursed,
And all their passports and certificates
A lie: nor disappointed more, nor more
Ashamed, the Mussulman, when he saw gnash
His teeth and wail, whom he expected Judge.
All these were damned for bigotry, were damned,
Because they thought, that they alone served God,
And served him most, when most they disobeyed.

Of those forlorn and sad, thou mightst have marked
In number most innumerable stand
The indolent: too lazy these to make
Inquiry for themselves, they stuck their faith
To some well fatted priest, with offerings bribed
To bring them oracles of peace, and take
Into his management all the concerns
Of their eternity: managed how well
They knew that day, and might have sooner known,
That the commandment was: Search and believe
In Me, and not in man; who leans on him
Leans on a broken reed that will impierce
The trusted side. I am the way, the truth,
The life alone, and there is none besides.

This did they read, and yet refused to search,
To search what easily was found, and, found,
Of price uncountable. Most foolish, they
Thought God with ignorance pleased, and blinded faith
That took no root in reason, purified
With holy influence of his Spirit pure.
So, on they walked, and stumbled in the light
Of noon, because they would not open their eyes.
Effect how sad of sloth! that made them risk
Their piloting to the eternal shore,
To one who could mistake the lurid flash
Of hell for heaven's true star, rather than bow
The knee, and by one fervent word obtain
His guidance sure, who calls the stars by name.
They prayed by proxy, and at second hand
Believed, and slept, and put repentance off,
Until the knock of death awoke them, when
They saw their ignorance both, and him they paid
To bargain of their souls 'twixt them and God,
Fled, and began repentance without end.
How did they wish, that morning, as they stood
With blushing covered, they had for themselves
The Scripture searched, had for themselves believed,
And made acquaintance with the Judge ere then!
Great day of termination to the joys
Of sin! to joys that grew on mortal boughs—
On trees whose seed fell not from heaven, whose top
Reached not above the clouds. From such alone
The epicure took all his meals; in choice
Of morsels for the body, nice he was,
And scrupulous, and knew all wines by smell
Or taste, and every composition knew
Of cookery; but grossly drank, unskilled,
The cup of spiritual pollution up,
That sickened his soul to death, while yet his eyes
Stood out with fat: his feelings were his guide;
He ate, and drank, and slept, and took all joys,
Forbid and unforbid, as impulse urged,
Or appetite; nor asked his reason why.
He said, he followed nature still, but lied;
For she was temperate and chaste, he full
Of wine and all adultery; her face
Was holy, most unholy his; her eye
Was pure, his shot unhallowed fire; her lips
Sang praise to God, his uttered oaths profane;
Her breath was sweet, his rank with foul debauch
Yet pleaded he a kind and feeling heart,
Even when he left a neighbour's bed defiled.
Like migratory fowls that flocking sailed
From isle to isle, steering by sense alone,
Whither the clime their liking best beseemed;
So he was guided; so he moved through good
And evil, right and wrong, but ah! to fate
All different: they slept in dust unpained;
He rose that day to suffer endless pain.

Cured of his unbelief, the sceptic stood,
Who doubted of his being while he breathed;
Than whom, glossography itself, that spoke
Huge folios of nonsense every hour,
And left, surrounding every page, its marks
Of prodigal stupidity, scarce more
Of folly raved. The tyrant too, who sat
In grisly council, like a spider couched,
With ministers of locust countenance,
And made alliances to rob mankind,
And holy termed—for still beneath a name
Of pious sound the wicked sought to veil
Their crimes—forgetful of his right divine,
Trembled, and owned oppression was of hell;
Nor did the uncivil robber, who unpursed
The traveller on the highway and cut
His throat, anticipate severer doom.

In that assembly there was one, who, while
Beneath the sun, aspired to be a fool:
In different ages known by different names,
Not worth repeating here. Be this enough:
With scrupulous care exact, he walked the rounds
Of fashionable duty; laughed when sad;
When merry, wept; deceiving, was deceived;
And flattering, flattered. Fashion was his god.
Obsequiously he fell before his shrine,
In slavish plight, and trembled to offend.
If graveness suited, he was grave; if else,
He travailed sorely, and made brief repose,
To work the proper quantity of sin.
In all submissive to its changing shape,
Still changing, girded he his vexed frame,
And laughter made to men of sounder head.
Most circumspect he was of bows, and nods,
And salutations; and most seriously
And deeply meditated he of dress;
And in his dreams saw lace and ribands fly.
His soul was nought—he damned it every day
Unceremoniously. Oh! fool of fools!
Pleased with a painted smile, he fluttered on,
Like fly of gaudy plume, by fashion driven,
As faded leaves by Autumn's wind, till Death
Put forth his hand and drew him out of sight.
Oh! fool of fools! polite to man; to God
Most rude: yet had he many rivals, who,
Age after age, great striving made to be
Ridiculous, and to forget they had
Immortal souls—that day remembered well.

Digitized by Google

As rueful stood his other half, as wan
Of cheek: small her ambition was—but strange.
The distaff, needle, all domestic cares,
Religion, children, husband, home, were things
She could not bear the thought of; bitter drugs
That sickened her soul. The house of wanton mirth
And revelry, the mask, the dance, she loved,
And in their service soul and body spent
Most cheerfully: a little admiration,
Or true, or false, no matter which, pleased her,
And o'er the wreck of fortune lost, and health,
And peace, and an eternity of bliss
Lost, made her sweetly smile. She was convinced
That God had made her greatly out of taste,
And took much pains to make herself anew.
Bedaubed with paint, and hung with ornaments
Of curious selection—gaudy toy!
A show unpaid for, paying to be seen!
As beggar by the way, most humbly asking
The alms of public gaze—she went abroad;
Folly admired, and indication gave
Of envy; cold Civility made bows,
And smoothly flattered; Wisdom shook his head;
And Laughter shaped his lip into a smile;
Sobriety did stare; Forethought grew pale;
And Modesty hung down the head and blushed;
And Pity wept, as on the frothy surge
Of fashion tossed, she passed them by, like sail
Before some devilish blast, and got no time
To think, and never thought, till on the rock
She dashed of ruin, anguish, and despair.

O how unlike this giddy thing in Time!
And at the day of judgment how unlike,
The modest, meek, retiring dame! Her house
Was ordered well; her children taught the way
Of life—who, rising up in honour, called
Her blest. Best pleased to be admired at home,
And hear reflected from her husband's praise,
Her own, she sought no gaze of foreign eye.
His praise alone, and faithful love, and trust
Reposed, was happiness enough for her.
Yet who that saw her pass, and heard the poor
With earnest benedictions on her steps
Attend, could from obeisance keep his eye,
Or tongue from due applause. In virtue fair
Adorned with modesty, and matron grace
Unspeakable, and love—her face was like
The light, most welcome to the eye of man;
Refreshing most, most honoured, most desired
Of all he saw in the dim world below.
As Morning when she shed her golden locks,
And on the dewy top of Hermon walked,
Or Zion hill—so glorious was her path
Old men beheld, and did her reverence,
And bade their daughters look, and take from her
Example of their future life; the young
Admired, and new resolve of virtue made.
And none who was her husband asked; his air
Serene, and countenance of joy, the sign
Of inward satisfaction, as he passed
The crowd, or sat among the elders, told.
In holiness complete, and in the robes
Of saving righteousness, arrayed for heaven,
How fair, that day, among the fair, she stood!
How lovely on the eternal hills her steps!

Restored to reason, on that morn appeared
The lunatic—who raved in chains, and asked
No mercy when he died. Of lunacy
Innumerous were the causes: humbled pride
Ambition disappointed, riches lost,
And bodily disease, and sorrow, oft
By man inflicted on his brother man;
Sorrow, that made the reason drunk, and yet
Left much untasted—so the cup was filled:
Sorrow that like an ocean, dark, deep, rough,
And shoreless, rolled its billows o'er the soul
Perpetually, and without hope of end.

Take one example, one of female woe.
Loved by a father, and a mother's love,
In rural peace she lived, so fair, so light
Of heart, so good, and young, that reason scarce
The eye could credit; but would doubt, as she
Did stoop to pull the lily or the rose
From morning's dew, if it reality
Of flesh and blood, or holy vision, saw,
In imagery of perfect womanhood.
But short her bloom—her happiness was short.
One saw her loveliness, and with desire
Unhallowed burning, to her ear addressed
Dishonest words: "Her favour was his life,
His heaven; her frown his woe, his night, his death."
With turgid phrase thus wove in flattery's loom,
He on her womanish nature won, and age
Suspicionless, and ruined and forsook:
For he a chosen villain was at heart,
And capable of deeds that durst not seek
Repentance. Soon her father saw her shame;
His heart grew stone; he drove her forth to want
And wintry winds, and with a horrid curse
Pursued her ear, forbidding all return.

Upon a hoary cliff that watched the sea,
Her babe was found—dead: on its little cheek,
The tear that nature bade it weep, had turned
An ice-drop, sparkling in the morning beam;
And to the turf its helpless hands were frozen:
For she—the woful mother, had gone mad,
And laid it down, regardless of its fate
And of her own. Yet had she many days
Of sorrow in the world, but never wept.
She lived on alms; and carried in her hand
Some withered stalks, she gathered in the spring:
When any asked the cause, she smiled, and said,
They were her sisters, and would come and watch
Her grave when she was dead. She never spoke
Of her deceiver, father, mother, home,
Or child, or heaven, or hell, or God; but still
In lonely places walked, and ever gazed
Upon the withered stalks, and talked to them;
Till, wasted to the shadow of her youth,
With woe too wide to see beyond—she died:
Not unatoned for by imputed blood,
Nor by the Spirit, that mysterious works,
Unsanctified. Aloud her father cursed
That day his guilty pride, which would not own
A daughter, whom the God of heaven and earth
Was not ashamed to call his own; and he
Who ruined her, read from her holy look,
That pierced him with perdition manifold,
His sentence; burning with vindictive fire.

Digitized by Google

The judge that took a bribe; he who amiss
Pleaded the widow's cause, and by delay
Delaying ever, made the law at night
More intricate than at the dawn, and on
The morrow farther from a close, than when
The sun last set, till he who in the suit
Was poorest, by his emptied coffers, proved
His cause the worst; and he that had the bag
Of weights deceitful, and the balance false;
And he that with a fraudful lip deceived
In buying or in selling:—these, that morn,
Found custom no excuse for sin, and knew
Plain dealing was a virtue, but too late.
And he that was supposed to do nor good
Nor ill, surprised, could find no neutral ground;
And learned, that to do nothing was to serve
The devil, and transgress the laws of God.
The noisy quack, that by profession lied,
And uttered falsehoods of enormous size,
With countenance as grave as truth beseemed;
And he that lied for pleasure, whom a lust
Of being heard, and making people stare,
And a most steadfast hate of silence, drove
Far wide of sacred truth, who never took
The pains to think of what he was to say,
But still made haste to speak, with weary tongue,
Like copious stream for ever flowing on—
Read clearly in the lettered heavens what long
Before they might have read: For every word
Of folly you this day shall give account;
And every liar shall his portion have
Among the cursed, without the gates of life.

With groans that made no pause, lamenting there
Were seen the duellist, and suicide:
This thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
He was entire proprietor; and so,
When he was tired of time, with his own hand,
He opened the portals of eternity,
And sooner than the devils hoped, arrived
In hell. The other, of resentment quick,
And, for a word, a look, a gesture, deemed
Not scrupulously exact in all respect,
Prompt to revenge, went to the cited field,
For double murder armed—his own, and his
That as himself he was ordained to love.
The first in pagan-books of early times,
Was heroism pronounced, and greatly praised,
In fashion's glossary of latter days,
The last was honour called, and spirit high.
Alas! 'twas mortal spirit; honour which
Forgot to wake at the last trumpet's voice,
Bearing the signature of time alone,
Uncurrent in eternity, and base.
Wise men suspected this before; for they
Could never understand what honour meant;
Or why that should be honour termed which made
Man murder man, and broke the laws of God
Most wantonly. Sometimes, indeed, the grave,
And those of christian creed imagined, spoke
Admiringly of honour, lauding much
The noble youth, who, after many rounds
Of boxing, died: or to the pistol shot,
His breast exposed, his soul to endless pain.
But they who most admired, and understood
This honour best, and on its altar laid
Their lives, most obviously were fools: and what
Fools only, and the wicked, understood—
The wise agreed, was some delusive Shade,
That with the mist of time should disappear.

Great day of revelation! in the grave
The hypocrite had left his mask, and stood
In naked ugliness. He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,
To serve the devil in; in virtue's guise
Devoured the widow's house and orphan's bread
In holy phrase transacted villanies
That common sinners durst not meddle with.
At sacred feast, he sat among the saints,
And with his guilty hands touched holiest things
And none of sin lamented more, or sighed
More deeply, or with graver countenance,
Or longer prayer, wept o'er the dying man
Whose infant children, at the moment, he
Planned how to rob: in sermon style he bought
And sold, and lied; and salutations made
In scripture terms: he prayed by quantity,
And with his repetitions long and loud,
All knees were weary; with one hand he put
A penny in the urn of poverty,
And with the other took a shilling out.
On charitable lists—those trumps which told
The public ear, who had in secret done
The poor a benefit, and half the alms
They told of, took themselves to keep them sounding—
He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there
Than in the book of life. Seest thou the man!
A serpent with an angel's voice! a grave
With flowers bestrewed! and yet few were deceived.
His virtues being over-done, his face
Too grave, his prayers too long, his charities
Too pompously attended, and his speech
Larded too frequently, and out of time
With serious phraseology—were rents
That in his garments opened in spite of him,
Through which the well accustomed eye could see
The rottenness of his heart. None deeper blushed,
As in the all-piercing light he stood exposed,
No longer herding with the holy ones:
Yet still he tried to bring his countenance
To sanctimonious seeming; but, meanwhile,
The shame within, now visible to all,
His purpose baulked:—the righteous smiled, and even
Despair itself some signs of laughter gave,
As ineffectually he strove to wipe
His brow, that inward guiltiness defiled.
Detected wretch! of all the reprobate,
None seemed maturer for the flames of hell;
Where still his face, from ancient custom, wears
A holy air, which says to all that pass
Him by: I was a hypocrite on earth.

That was the hour which measured out to each,
Impartially, his share of reputation!
Correcting all mistakes, and from the name
Of the good man, all slanders wiping off.
Good name was dear to all: without it, none
Could soundly sleep even on a royal bed;
Or drink with relish from a cup of gold:
And with it, on his borrowed straw, or by

Digitized by Google

The leafless hedge, beneath the open heavens,
The weary beggar took untroubled rest.
It was a music of most heavenly tone,
To which the heart leaped joyfully, and all
The spirits danced: for honest fame, men laid
Their heads upon the block, and while the axe
Descended, looked and smiled. It was of price
Invaluable—riches, health, repose,
Whole kingdoms, life, were given for it, and he
Who got it was the winner still; and he
Who sold it, durst not open his ear, nor look
On human face, he knew himself so vile.
Yet it, with all its preciousness, was due
To virtue, and around her should have shed,
Unasked, its savoury smell; but Vice, deformed
Itself, and ugly, and of flavour rank,
To rob fair Virtue of so sweet an incense,
And with it to anoint and salve its own
Rotten ulcers, and perfume the path that led
To death, strove daily by a thousand means;
And oft succeeded to make Virtue sour
In the world's nostrils, and its loathly self
Smell sweetly. Rumour was the messenger
Of defamation—and so swift that none
Could be the first to tell an evil tale;
And was withal so infamous for lies,
That he who of her sayings on his creed
The fewest entered, was deemed wisest man.
The fool, and many who had credit too
For wisdom, grossly swallowed all she said
Unsifted; and although at every word
They heard her contradict herself, and saw
Hourly they were imposed upon, and mocked,
Yet still they ran to hear her speak, and stared,
And wondered much, and stood aghast, and said—
It could not be; and while they blushed for shame
At their own faith, and seemed to doubt—believed,
And whom they met, with many sanctions, told.
So did experience fail to teach; so hard
It was to learn this simple truth, confirmed
At every corner by a thousand proofs—
That common fame most impudently lied.

'Twas Slander filled her mouth with lying words;
Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin: the man
In whom this spirit entered was undone.
His tongue was set on fire of hell; his heart
Was black as death; his legs were faint with haste
To propagate the lie his soul had framed;
His pillow was the peace of families
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods:
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
Number the midnight watches, on his bed
Devising mischief more: and early rose,
And made most hellish meals of good men's names.

From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
And whispering in their ears, with his foul lips.
Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
His haunts: and like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots, and blooms
Of social joy, and happiness, decayed.
Fools only in his company were seen,
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
Given up: the prudent shunned him, and his house,
As one who had a deadly moral plague.
And fain would all have shunned him at the day
Of judgment; but in vain. All who gave ear
With greediness, or wittingly their tongues
Made herald to his lies, around him wailed;
While on his face, thrown back by injured men,
In characters of ever-blushing shame,
Appeared ten thousand slanders, all his own.

Among the accursed, who sought a hiding-place
In vain, from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,
And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb,
Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile,
Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt
The fellest gnaw of the undying Worm.
And so he might, for he had on his hands
The blood of souls, that would not wipe away.
Hear what he was:—He swore in sight of God,
And man, to preach his master, Jesus Christ;
Yet preached himself: he swore that love of souls
Alone, had drawn him to the church; yet strewed
The path that led to hell with tempting flowers,
And in the ear of sinners, as they took
The way of death, he whispered peace: he swore
Away all love of lucre, all desire
Of earthly pomp, and yet a princely seat
He liked, and to the clink of Mammon's box
Gave most rapacious ear: his prophecies,
He swore, were from the Lord; and yet taught lies
For gain; with quackish ointment healed the wounds,
And bruises of the soul outside, but left
Within the pestilent matter, unobserved,
To sap the moral constitution quite,
And soon to burst again, incurable.
He with untempered mortar daubed the walls
Of Zion, saying, Peace, when there was none.
The man who came with thirsty soul to hear
Of Jesus, went away unsatisfied:
For he another gospel preached than Paul,
And one that had no Saviour in't. And yet
His life was worse. Faith, charity, and love,
Humility, forgiveness, holiness,
Were words well lettered in his sabbath creed;
But with his life he wrote as plain—revenge,
Pride, tyranny, and lust of wealth and power
Inordinate, lewdness unashamed.
He was a wolf in clothing of the lamb,
That stole into the fold of God, and on
The blood of souls which he did sell to death,
Grew fat: and yet when any would have turned
Him out, he cried:—Touch not the priest of God.
And that he was anointed, fools believed:
But knew that day, he was the devil's priest:
Anointed by the hands of Sin and Death,
And set peculiarly apart to ill,—
While on him smoked the vials of perdition
Poured measureless. Ah me! what cursing then
Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls,
That charged him with their murder, as he stood
With eye of all the unredeemed, most sad.

Digitized by Google

Waiting the coming of the Son of Man!
But let me pause, for thou hast seen his place,
And punishment, beyond the sphere of love.

Much was removed that tempted once to sin.
Avarice no gold, no wine the drunkard saw:
But Envy had enough, as heretofore,
To fill his heart with gall and bitterness.
What made the man of envy what he was,
Was worth in others, vileness in himself;
A lust of praise, with undeserving deeds,
And conscious poverty of soul: and still
It was his earnest work and daily toil
With lying tongue, to make the noble seem
Mean as himself. On fame's high hill he saw
The laurel spread its everlasting green,
And wished to climb: but felt his knees too weak:
And stood below, unhappy, laying hands
Upon the strong, ascending gloriously
The steps of honour, bent to draw them back;
Involving oft the brightness of their path
In mists his breath had raised. Whene'er he heard,
As oft he did, of joy and happiness,
And great prosperity, and rising worth,
'Twas like a wave of wormwood o'er his soul
Rolling its bitterness. His joy was woe:
The woe of others: when, from wealth to want,
From praises to reproach, from peace to strife,
From mirth to tears, he saw a brother fall,
Or virtue make a slip—his dreams were sweet.
But chief with slander, daughter of his own,
He took unhallowed pleasure: when she talked,
And with her filthy lips defiled the best,
His ear drew near; with wide attention gaped
His mouth; his eye, well pleased, as eager gazed
As glutton, when the dish he most desired
Was placed before him; and a horrid mirth,
At intervals, with laughter shook his sides.
The critic, too, who, for a bit of bread,
In book that fell aside before the ink
Was dry, poured forth excessive nonsense, gave
Him much delight. The critics—some, but few,
Were worthy men: and earned renown which had
Immortal roots: but most were weak and vile:
And as a cloudy swarm of summer flies,
With angry hum and slender lance, beset
The sides of some huge animal; so did
They buzz about the illustrious man, and fain
With his immortal honour, down the stream
Of fame would have descended; but alas!
The hand of Time drove them away: they were,
Indeed, a simple race of men, who had
One only art, which taught them still to say—
Whate'er was done, might have been better done:
And with this art, not ill to learn, they made
A shift to live: but sometimes too, beneath
The dust they raised, was worth awhile obscured;
And then did Envy prophesy and laugh.
O Envy! hide thy bosom! hide it deep:
A thousand snakes, with black envenomed mouths
Nest there, and hiss, and feed through all thy heart!

Such one I saw, here interposing, said
The new arrived, in that dark den of shame,
Whom, who hath seen shall never wish to see
Again: before him, in the infernal gloom,
That omnipresent shape of Virtue stood,
On which he ever threw his eye; and like
A cinder that had life and feeling, seemed
His face, with inward pining, to be what
He could not be. As being that had burned
Continually in slow consuming fire,
Half an eternity, and was to burn
For evermore, he looked. Oh! sight to be
Forgotten! thought too horrible to think!

But say, believing in such woe to come,
Such dreadful certainty of endless pain,
Could beings of forecasting mould, as thou
Entitlest men, deliberately walk on,
Unscared, and overleap their own belief
Into the lake of ever burning fire?

Thy tone of asking seems to make reply,
And rightly seems: They did not so believe.
Not one of all thou saw'st lament and wail
In Tophet, perfectly believed the word
Of God, else none had thither gone. Absurd,
To think that beings made with reason, formed
To calculate, compare, choose, and reject,
By nature taught, and self, and every sense,
To choose the good and pass the evil by,
Could, with full credence of a time to come
When all the wicked should be really damned,
And cast beyond the sphere of light and love,
Have persevered in sin! Too foolish this
For folly in its prime. Can aught that thinks,
And wills, choose certain evil and reject
Good, in his heart believing he does so?
Could man choose pain, instead of endless joy?
Mad supposition, though maintained by some
Of honest mind. Behold a man condemned!
Either he ne'er inquired, and therefore he
Could not believe; or else he carelessly
Inquired, and something other than the word
Of God received into his cheated faith,
And therefore he did not believe, but down
To hell descended, leaning on a lie.
Faith was bewildered much by men who meant
To make it clear—so simple in itself;
A thought so rudimental and so plain
That none by comment could it plainer make.
All faith was one: in object, not in kind
The difference lay. The faith that saved a soul
And that which in the common truth believed,
In essence were the same. Hear then, what faith
True, Christian faith, which brought salvation, was:—
Belief in all that God revealed to men:
Observe—in all that God revealed to men;
In all he promised, threatened, commanded, said
Without exception, and without a doubt.
Who thus believed, being by the Spirit touched,
As naturally the fruits of faith produced—
Truth, temperance, meekness, holiness, and love—
As human eye from darkness sought the light.
How could he else? If he who had firm faith
The morrow's sun should rise, ordered affairs
Accordingly; if he who had firm faith
That spring, and summer, and autumnal days
Should pass away, and winter really come,
Prepared accordingly; if he who saw

Digitized by Google

A bolt of death approaching, turned aside
And let it pass; as surely did the man
Who verily believed the word of God,
Though erring whiles, its general laws obey,
Turn back from hell, and take the way to heaven.

That faith was necessary, some alleged,
Unreined and uncontrollable by will.
Invention savouring much of hell! Indeed,
It was the master-stroke of wickedness,
Last effort of Abaddon's council dark,
To make man think himself a slave to fate,
And worst of all, a slave to fate in faith.
For thus 'twas reasoned then:—From faith alone,
And from opinion, springs all action: hence,
If faith's compelled, so is all action too:
But deeds compelled are not accountable;
So man is not amenable to God.

Arguing that brought such monstrous birth, though good
It seemed, must have been false: most false it was,
And by the book of God condemned throughout.
We freely own that truth, when set before
The mind, with perfect evidence, compelled
Belief: but error lacked such witness still.
And none, who now lament in moral night,
The word of God refused on evidence
That might not have been set aside, as false.
To reason, try, choose and reject, was free:
Hence God, by faith, acquitted, or condemned;
Hence righteous men, with liberty of will
Believed; and hence thou saw'st in Erebus,
The wicked, who as freely disbelieved
What else had led them to the land of life.

BOOK IX.

ANALYSIS.

An apostrophe to Religion, Virtue, Piety, or love of Holiness.

Description of several classes of the redeemed. The faithful minister, the true philosopher, the righteous governor, the uncorrupted statesman, the brave general, the man of active benevolence and charity, the Christian bard. And the most numerous among the saved were such, who on earth were eclipsed by lowly circumstances, many of whom were seen "highest and first in honour."

Suddenly an innumerous host of angels, headed by Michael and Gabriel, descended from heaven, silently and without song, and lifting mankind into mid air, parted the good and bad; to the right and left, the good to weep no more, and the bad never to smile again; the righteous placed "beneath a crown of rosy light," and the wicked were driven and bound under a cloud of darkness, where stood also Satan and his legion, awaiting the judgment and punishment due to their rebellion.

Fairest of those that left the calm of heaven
And ventured down to man, with words of peace
Daughter of Grace! known by whatever name,
Religion! Virtue! Piety! or Love
Of Holiness! the day of thy reward
Was come. Ah! thou wast long despised: despised
By those thou wooedst from death to endless life
Modest and meek, in garments white as those
That seraphs wear, and countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear,
With eye of purity, now darted up
To God's eternal throne, now humbly bent
Upon thyself, and weeping down thy cheek
That glowed with universal love immense,
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven;
In thy left hand, the olive branch, and in
Thy right, the crown of immortality—
With noiseless foot, thou walkedst the vales of earth,
Beseeching men from age to age, to turn
From utter death—to turn from woe to bliss;
Beseeching evermore, and evermore
Despised—not evermore despised, not now,
Not at the day of doom: most lovely then,
Most honourable thou appeared, and most
To be desired. The guilty heard the song
Of thy redeemed, how loud! and saw thy face,
How fair!—Alas! it was too late! the hour
Of making friends was past; thy favour then
Might not be sought: but recollection, sad
And accurate, as miser counting o'er
And o'er again the sum he must lay out,
Distinctly in the wicked's ear rehearsed
Each opportunity despised and lost;
While on them gleamed thy holy look, that like
A fiery torrent went into their souls.
The day of thy reward was come—the day
Of great remuneration to thy friends;
To those, known by whatever name, who sought,
In every place, in every time, to do
Unfeignedly their Maker's will, revealed,
Or gathered else from nature's school; well pleased
With God's applause alone, that, like a stream
Of sweetest melody, at still of night
By wanderer heard, in their most secret ear,
For ever whispered, Peace; and as a string
Of kindred tone awoke, their inmost soul,
Responsive, answered, Peace; inquiring still
And searching, night and day, to know their duty—
When known, with undisputing trust, with love
Unquenchable, with zeal, by reason's lamp
Inflamed—performing; and to Him, by whose
Profound, all-calculating skill alone,
Results—results even of the slightest act,
Are fully grasped, with unsuspicious faith,
All consequences leaving; to abound
Or want alike prepared; who knew to be
Exalted how, and how to be abased;
How best to live, and how to die when asked.
Their prayers sincere, their alms in secret done,
Their fightings with themselves, their abstinence
From pleasure, though by mortal eye unseen,
Their hearts of resignation to the will
Of Heaven, their patient bearing of reproach
And shame, their charity, and faith, and hope

Digitized by Google

Thou didst remember, and in full repaid.
No bankrupt thou, who at the bargained hour
Of payment due, sent to his creditors
A tale of losses and mischances long.
Insured by God himself, and from the stores
And treasures of his wealth at will supplied,
Religion! thou alone, of all that men,
On Earth, gave credit, to be reimbursed
On the other side the grave, didst keep thy word,
Thy day, and all thy promises fulfilled.

As in the mind, rich with unborrowed wealth,
Where multitudes of thoughts for utterance strive,
And all so fair, that each seems worthy first
To enter on the tongue, and from the lips
Have passage forth,—selection hesitates,
Perplexed, and loses time; anxious, since all
Cannot be taken, to take the best; and yet
Afraid, lest what be left be worthier still;
And grieving much, where all so goodly look,
To leave rejected one, or in the rear
Let any be obscured: so did the bard,
Though not unskilled, as on that multitude
Of men, who once awoke to judgment, he
Threw back reflection, hesitating, pause.
For as his harp, in tone severe, had sung
What figure the most famous sinners made,
When from the grave they rose unmasked; so did
He wish to character the good: but yet
Among so many, glorious all, all worth
Immortal fame, with whom begin, with whom
To end, was difficult to choose; and long
His auditors, upon the tiptoe raised
Of expectation, might have kept, had not
His eye—for so it is in heaven, that what
Is needed always is at hand—beheld,
That moment, on a mountain near the throne
Of God, the most renowned of the redeemed
Rejoicing; nor who first, who most to praise,
Debated more; but thus, with sweeter note,
Well pleased to sing, with highest eulogy,
And first, whom God applauded most,—began.

With patient ear, thou now hast heard—though whiles
Aside digressing, ancient feeling turned
My lyre,—what shame the wicked had that day;
What wailing, what remorse: so hear in brief,
How bold the righteous stood—the men redeemed!
How fair in virtue! and in hope how glad!
And first among the holy shone, as best
Became, the faithful minister of God.

See where he walks on yonder mount, that lifts
Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss!
Sublime in glory! talking with his peers
Of the Incarnate Saviour's love, and past
Affliction, lost in present joy! See how
His face with heavenly ardour glows! and how
His hand, enraptured, strikes the golden lyre!
As now conversing of the Lamb once slain,
He speaks; and now, from vines that never hear
Of winter, but in monthly harvest yield
Their fruit abundantly, he plucks the grapes
Of life! but what he was on earth it most
Behoves to say:—Elect by God himself;
Anointed by the Holy Ghost, and set
Apart to the great work of saving men;
Instructed fully in the will divine;
Supplied with grace in store, as need might ask
And with the stamp and signature of heaven,
Truth, mercy, patience, holiness and love,
Accredited;—he was a man by God,
The Lord, commissioned to make known to men,
The eternal counsels; in his Master's name,
To treat with them of everlasting things;
Of life, death, bliss, and woe: to offer terms
Of pardon, grace, and peace, to the rebelled;
To teach the ignorant soul; to cheer the sad;
To bind, to loose with all authority:
To give the feeble strength, the hopeless hope;
To help the halting, and to lead the blind;
To warn the careless; heal the sick of heart;
Arouse the indolent; and on the proud
And obstinate offender, to denounce
The wrath of God. All other men, what name
Soe'er they bore, whatever office held,
If lawful held—the magistrate supreme,
Or else subordinate, were chosen by men,
Their fellows, and from men derived their power,
And were accountable for all they did
To men; but he alone his office held
Immediately from God, from God received
Authority, and was to none but God
Amenable. The elders of the church,
Indeed, upon him laid their hands, and set
Him visibly apart to preach the word
Of life; but this was merely outward rite,
And decent ceremonial, performed
On all alike; and oft, as thou hast heard,
Performed on those, God never sent: his call,
His consecration, his anointing, all
Were inward; in the conscience heard and felt.
Thus by Jehovah chosen and ordained,
To take into his charge the souls of men;
And for his trust to answer at the day
Of judgment—great plenipotent of heaven,
And representative of God on earth—
Fearless of men and devils; unabashed
By sin enthroned, or mockery of a prince;
Unawed by armed legions; unseduced
By offered bribes; burning with love to souls
Unquenchable, and mindful still of his
Great charge and vast responsibility,
High in the temple of the living God
He stood, amidst the people, and declared
Aloud the truth, the whole revealed truth,
Ready to seal it with his blood. Divine
Resemblance most complete! with mercy now,
And love, his face, illumed, shone gloriously;
And frowning now indignantly, it seemed
As if offended Justice, from his eye,
Streamed forth vindictive wrath! Men heard alarmed:
The uncircumcised infidel believed;
Light thoughted Mirth grew serious and wept;
The laugh profane sunk in a sigh of deep
Repentance; the blasphemer, kneeling, prayed,
And, prostrate in the dust, for mercy called;
And cursed old forsaken sinners gnashed
Their teeth, as if their hour had been arrived.
Such were his calling, his commission such:
Yet he was humble, kind, forgiving, meek,
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild;

Digitized by Google

And with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counselled, warned,
In fervent style and manner. Needy, poor,
And dying men, like music, heard his feet
Approach their beds; and guilty wretches took
New hope, and in his prayers wept and smiled,
And blessed him, as they died forgiven; and all
Saw in his face contentment, in his life,
The path to glory and perpetual joy.
Deep learned in the philosophy of heaven,
He searched the causes out of good and ill,
Profoundly calculating their effects
Far past the bounds of time; and balancing,
In the arithmetic of future things,
The loss and profit of the soul to all
Eternity. A skilful workman he,
In God's great moral vineyard; what to prune
With cautious hand, he knew; what to uproot;
What were mere weeds, and what celestial plants,
Which had unfading vigour in them, knew:
Nor knew alone; but watched them night and day,
And reared and nourished them, till fit to be
Transplanted to the Paradise above.

O! who can speak his praise! great, humble man!
He in the current of destruction stood,
And warned the sinner of his woe; led on
Immanuel's armies in the evil day;
And with the everlasting arms, embraced
Himself around, stood in the dreadful front
Of battle, high, and warred victoriously
With death and hell. And now was come his rest,
His triumph day: illustrious like a sun,
In that assembly, he, shining from far,
Most excellent in glory, stood assured,
Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,
The welcome and approval of his Lord.
Nor one alone, but many—prophets, priests
Apostles, great reformers, all that served
Messiah faithfully, like stars appeared,
Of fairest beam; and round them gathered, clad
In white, the vouchers of their ministry—
The flock their care had nourished, fed, and saved.

Nor yet in common glory, blazing, stood
The true philosopher, decided friend
Of truth and man; determined foe of all
Deception,—calm, collected, patient, wise,
And humble; undeceived by outward shape
Of things; by fashion's revelry uncharmed;
By honour unbewitched;—he left the chase
Of vanity, and all the quackeries
Of life, to fools and heroes, or whoe'er
Desired them; and with reason, much despised,
Traduced, yet heavenly reason, to the shade
Retired—retired, but not to dream, or build
Of ghostly fancies, seen in the deep noon
Of sleep, ill balanced theories; retired,
But did not leave mankind; in pity, not
In wrath, retired; and still, though distant, kept
His eye on men; at proper angle took
His stand to see them better, and beyond
The clamour which the bells of folly made,
That most had hung about them, to consult
With nature, how their madness might be cured,
And how their true substantial comforts might
Be multiplied. Religious man! what God
By prophets, priests, evangelists, revealed
Of sacred truth, he thankfully received,
And, by its light directed, went in search
Of more: before him, darkness fled: and all
The goblin tribe, that hung upon the breasts
Of night, and haunted still the moral gloom,—
With shapeless forms, and blue infernal lights,
And indistinct and devilish whisperings,
That the miseducated fancies vexed
Of superstitious men,—at his approach,
Dispersed invisible. Where'er he went,
This lesson still he taught: To fear no ill
But sin, no being but Almighty God.
All-comprehending sage! too hard alone
For him was man's salvation; all besides,
Of use or comfort, that distinction made
Between the desperate savage, scarcely raised
Above the beast whose flesh he ate undressed,
And the most polished of the human race.
Was product of his persevering search.
Religion owed him much, as from the false
She suffered much; for still his main design,
In all his contemplations, was to trace
The wisdom, providence, and love of God,
And to his fellows, less observant, show
Them forth. From prejudice redeemed, with all
His passions still, above the common world,
Sublime in reason, and in aim sublime,
He sat, and on the marvellous works of God,
Sedately thought: now glancing up his eye
Intelligent, through all the starry dance;
And penetrating now the deep remote
Of central causes, in the womb opaque
Of matter hid; now, with inspection nice,
Entering the mystic labyrinths of the mind,
Where thought, of notice ever shy, behind
Thought disappearing, still retired; and still,
Thought meeting thought, and thought awakening thought,
And mingling still with thought, in endless maze,—
Bewildered observation: now with eye,
Yet more severely purged, looking far down
Into the heart, where Passion wove a web
Of thousand thousand threads, in grain and hue
All different; then, upward venturing whiles,
But reverently, and in his hand, the light
Revealed, near the eternal throne, he gazed,
Philosophizing less than worshipping.
Most truly great! his intellectual strength,
And knowledge vast, to men of lesser mind
Seemed infinite; yet from his high pursuits,
And reasonings most profound, he still returned
Home, with an humbler and a warmer heart.
And none so lowly bowed before his God,
As none so well His awful majesty
And goodness comprehended; or so well
His own dependency and weakness knew.

How glorious now! with vision purified
At the Essential Truth, entirely free
From error, he, investigating still—
For knowledge is not found, unsought, in heaven,—
From world to world at pleasure roves, on wing
Of golden ray upborne; or, at the feet

Digitized by Google

Of heaven's most ancient sages, sitting, hears
New wonders of the wondrous works of God.

Illustrious too, that morning, stood the man
Exalted by the people, to the throne
Of government, established on the base
Of justice, liberty, and equal right:
Who, in his countenance sublime, expressed
A nation's majesty, and yet was meek
And humble; and in royal palace gave
Example to the meanest, of the fear
Of God, and all integrity of life
And manners; who, august, yet lowly; who,
Severe, yet gracious; in his very heart
Detesting all oppression, all intent
Of private aggrandizement: and the first
In every public duty,—held the scales
Of justice, and as the law, which reigned in him,
Commanded, gave rewards; or with the edge
Vindictive, smote,—now light, now heavily,
According to the stature of the crime.
Conspicuous, like an oak of healthiest bough,
Deep rooted in his country's love, he stood
And gave his hand to Virtue, helping up
The honest man to honour and renown;
And with the look which goodness wears in wrath,
Withering the very blood of Knavery,
And from his presence driving far, ashamed.

Nor less remarkable, among the blest,
Appeared the man, who, in the senate-house,
Watchful, unhired, unbribed, and uncorrupt,
And party only to the common weal,
In virtue's awful rage, pleaded for right,
With truth so clear, with argument so strong,
With action so sincere, and tone so loud
And deep, as made the despot quake behind
His adamantine gates, and every joint
In terror smite his fellow-joint relaxed;
Or, marching to the field, in burnished steel,
While, frowning on his brow, tremendous hung
The wrath of a whole people, long provoked,—
Mustered the stormy wings of war, in day
Of dreadful deeds; and led the battle on,
When liberty, swift as the fires of heaven,
In fury rode, with all her hosts, and threw
The tyrant down; or drove invasion back.
Illustrious he—illustrious all appeared,
Who ruled supreme in righteousness; or held
Inferior place, in steadfast rectitude
Of soul. Peculiarly severe had been
The nurture of their youth; their knowledge great;
Great was their wisdom; great their cares, and great
Their self-denial, and their service done
To God and man; and great was their reward
At hand, proportioned to their worthy deeds.

Breathe all thy minstrelsy, immortal harp!
Breathe numbers warm with love, while I rehearse—
Delightful theme! resembling the songs
Which, day and night, are sung before the Lamb!—
Thy praise, O Charity! thy labours most
Divine; thy sympathy with sighs, and tears,
And groans; thy great, thy god-like wish to heal
All misery, all fortune's wounds; and make
The soul of every living thing rejoice.
O thou wast needed much in days of time!
No virtue, half so much; none half so fair:
To all the rest, however fine, thou gavest
A finishing and polish, without which
No man e'er entered heaven. Let me record
His praise,—the man of great benevolence,
Who pressed thee closely to his glowing heart,
And to thy gentle bidding made his feet
Swift minister.—Of all mankind, his soul
Was most in harmony with heaven: as one
Sole family of brothers, sisters, friends;
One in their origin, one in their rights
To all the common gifts of providence,
And in their hopes, their joys, and sorrows one.
He viewed the universal human race.
He needed not a law of state, to force
Grudging submission to the law of God;
The law of love was in his heart, alive:
What he possessed, he counted not his own
But like a faithful steward, in a house
Of public alms, what freely he received,
He freely gave; distributing to all
The helpless, the last mite beyond his own
Temperate support, and reckoning still the gift
But justice, due to want; and so it was;
Although the world, with compliment not ill
Applied, adorned it with a fairer name.
Nor did he wait till to his door the voice
Of supplication came, but went abroad,
With foot as silent as the starry dews,
In search of misery that pined unseen,
And would not ask. And who can tell what sights
He saw! what groans he heard in that cold world
Below! where Sin, in league with gloomy Death,
Marched daily through the length and breadth of all
The land, wasting at will, and making earth,
Fair earth! a lazar-house, a dungeon dark,
Where Disappointment fed on ruined Hope;
Where Guilt, worn out, leaned on the triple edge
Of want, remorse, despair; where Cruelty
Reached forth a cup of wormwood to the lips
Of Sorrow, that to deeper Sorrow wailed;
Where Mockery, and Disease, and Poverty,
Met miserable Age, erewhile sore bent
With his own burden; while the arrowy winds
Of winter pierced the naked orphan babe,
And chilled the mother's heart, who had no home;
And where, alas! in mid-time of his day,
The honest man, robbed by some villain's hand,
Or with long sickness pale, and paler yet
With want and hunger, oft drank bitter draughts
Of his own tears, and had no bread to eat.
Oh! who can tell what sights he saw, what shapes
Of wretchedness! or who describe what smiles
Of gratitude illumed the face of woe,
While from his hand he gave the bounty forth!
As when the sun, to Cancer wheeling back,
Returned from Capricorn, and showed the north,
That long had lain in cold and cheerless night,
His beamy countenance, all nature then
Rejoiced together glad; the flower looked up
And smiled; the forest from his locks shook off
The hoary frosts, and clapped his hands; the birds

Digitized by Google

Awoke, and, singing, rose to meet the day;
And from his hollow den, where many months
He slumbered sad in darkness, blythe and light
Of heart the savage spring; and saw again
His mountains shine; and with new songs of love,
Allured the virgin's ear—so did the house,
The prison-house of guilt, and all the abodes
Of unprovided hopelessness, revive,
As on them looked the sunny messenger
Of charity; by angels tended still,
That marked his deeds, and wrote them in the book
Of God's remembrance:—careless he to be
Observed of men; or have each mite bestowed
Recorded punctually, with name and place,
In every bill of news: pleased to do good,
He gave and sought no more—nor questioned much,
Nor reasoned who deserved; for well he knew
The face of need. Ah me! who could mistake?
The shame to ask, the want that urged within,
Composed a look so perfectly distinct
From all else human, and withal so full
Of misery, that none could pass untouched
And be a christian; or thereafter claim,
In any form, the name or rights of man;
Or, at the day of judgment, lift his eye:
While he, in name of Christ, who gave the poor
A cup of water, or a bit of bread,
Impatient for his advent, waiting stood,
Glowing in robes of love and holiness,
Heaven's fairest dress! and round him ranged in white,
A thousand witnesses appeared, prepared
To tell his gracious deeds before the throne.

Nor unrenowned among the most renowned,
Nor 'mong the fairest unadmired, that morn,
When highest fame was proof of highest worth,
Distinguished stood the bard;—not he, who sold
The incommunicable heavenly gift,
To Folly; and with lyre of perfect tone,
Prepared by God himself, for honest praise—
Vilest of traitors! most dishonest man!—
Sat by the door of Ruin, and made there
A melody so sweet, and in the mouth
Of drunkenness and debauch, that else had croaked
In natural discordance jarring harsh,
Put so divine a song, that many turned
Aside, and entered in undone; and thought,
Meanwhile, it was the gate of heaven; so like
An angel's voice the music seemed: nor he,
Who, whining grievously of damsel coy,
Or blaming fortune, that would nothing give
For doing nought, in indolent lament,
Unprofitable, passed his piteous days,
Making himself the hero of his tale—
Deserving ill the poet's name. But he,
The bard, by God's own hand anointed, who,
To Virtue's all-delighting harmony,
His numbers tuned; who from the fount of truth
Poured melody, and beauty poured, and love,
In holy stream, into the human heart;
And from the height of lofty argument,
Who justified the ways of God to man,
And sung, what still he sings—approved in heaven,
Though now with bolder note, above the damp
Terrestrial, which the pure celestial fire
Cooled, and restrained in part his flaming wing.

Philosophy was deemed of deeper thought,
And judgment more severe than Poetry;
To fable she, and fancy more inclined.
And yet if Fancy, as was understood,
Was of creative nature, or of power
With self-wrought stuff to build a fabric up,
To mortal vision wonderful and strange,
Philosophy, the theoretic, claimed
Undoubtedly the first and highest place
In Fancy's favour: her material souls;
Her chance; her atoms shaped alike; her white
Proved black; her universal nothing, all;
And all her wondrous systems, how the mind
With matter met; how man was free, and yet
All preordained; how evil first began;
And chief, her speculations, soarings high,
Of the eternal uncreated Mind,
Which left all reason infinitely far
Behind—surprising feat of theory!
Were pure creation of her own: webs wove
Of gossamer in Fancy's lightest loom;
And no where, on the list of being made
By God, recorded: but her look meanwhile
Was grave and studious; and many thought
She reasoned deeply, when she wildly raved.

The true, legitimate, anointed bard,
Whose song through ages poured its melody,
Was most severely thoughtful, most minute
And accurate of observation, most
Familiarly acquainted with all modes
And phases of existence. True, no doubt,
He had originally drunk, from out
The fount of life and love, a double draught,
That gave, whate'er he touched, a double life;
But this was mere desire at first, and power
Devoid of means to work by; need was still
Of persevering, quick, inspective mood
Of mind, of faithful memory, vastly stored,
From universal being's ample field,
With knowledge; and a judgment sound and clear,
Well disciplined in nature's rules of taste:
Discerning to select, arrange, combine,
From infinite variety, and still
To nature true; and guide withal, hard task,
The sacred living impetus divine,
Discreetly through the harmony of song.
Completed thus, the poet sung; and age
To age, enraptured, heard his measures flow
Enraptured, for he poured the very fat
And marrow of existence through his verse;
And gave the soul—that else in selfish cold,
Unwarmed by kindred interest, had lain—
A roomy life, a glowing relish high,
A sweet expansive brotherhood of being,—
Joy answering joy, and sigh responding sigh,
Through all the fibres of the social heart.
Observant, sympathetic, sound of head,
Upon the ocean vast of human thought,
With passion rough and stormy, venturing out,
Even as the living billows rolled, he threw
His numbers over them, seized as they were,
And to perpetual ages left them fixed,
To each, a mirror of itself displayed

Digitized by Google

Despair for ever lowering dark on Sin;
And Happiness on Virtue smiling fair.

He was the minister of fame; and gave
To whom he would renown; nor missed himself,
Although despising much the idiot roar
Of popular applause, that sudden oft
Unnaturally turning, whom it nursed
Itself devoured,—the lasting fame, the praise
Of God and holy men, to excellence given.
Yet less he sought his own renown, than wished
To have the eternal images of truth
And beauty, pictured in his verse, admired.
'Twas these, taking immortal shape and form
Beneath his eye, that charmed his midnight watch,
And oft his soul with awful transports shook,
Of happiness, unfelt by other men.
This was that spell, that sorcery, which bound
The poet to the lyre, and would not let
Him go; that hidden mystery of joy,
Which made him sing in spite of fortune's worst;
And was, at once, both motive and reward.

Nor now among the choral harps, in this
The native clime of song, are those unknown,
With higher note ascending, who, below,
In holy ardour, aimed at lofty strains.
True fame is never lost: many, whose names
Were honoured much on Earth, are famous here
For poetry, and with archangel harps,
Hold no unequal rivalry in song;
Leading the choirs of heaven, in numbers high,
In numbers ever sweet and ever new.

Behold them yonder, where the river pure
Flows warbling down before the throne of God,
And, shading, on each side, the tree of life
Spreads its unfading boughs! see how they shine,
In garments white, quaffing deep draughts of love,
And harping on their harps, new harmonies
Preparing for the ear of God, Most High!

But why should I, of individual worth,
Of individual glory, longer sing?
No true believer was that day obscure;
No holy soul but had enough of joy;
No pious wish without its full reward.
Who in the Father and the Son believed,
With faith that wrought by love to holy deeds,
And purified the heart, none trembled there,
Nor had by earthly guise his rank concealed:
Whether, unknown, he tilled the ground remote,
Observant of the seasons, and adored
God in the promise yearly verified,
Of seed-time, harvest, summer, winter, day
And night, returning duly at the time
Appointed; or on the shadowy mountain side,
Worshipped at dewy eve, watching his flocks;
Or, trading, saw the wonders of the deep,
And as the needle to the starry pole
Turned constantly, so he his heart to God;
Or else, in servitude severe, was taught
To break the bonds of sin; or, begging, learned
To trust the Providence that fed the raven,
And clothed the lily with her annual gown.

Most numerous indeed, among the saved,
And many too, not least illustrious, shone,
The men who had no name on earth: eclipsed
By lowly circumstance, they lived unknown;
Like stream that in the desert warbles clear,
Still nursing, as it goes, the herb and flower,
Though never seen; or like the star retired
In solitudes of ether, far beyond
All sight, not of essential splendour less,
Though shining unobserved; none saw their pure
Devotion, none their tears, their faith, and love
Which burned within them, both to God and man'
None saw but God. He, in his bottle, all
Their tears preserved, and every holy wish
Wrote in his book; and not as they had done,
But as they wished with all their heart to do,
Arrayed them now in glory, and displayed,—
No longer hid by coarse uncourtly garb—
In lustre equal to their inward worth.

Man's time was past, and his eternity
Begun! no fear remained of change. The youth,
Who, in the glowing morn of vigorous life,
High reaching after great religious deeds,
Was suddenly cut off, with all his hopes
In sunny bloom, and unaccomplished left
His withered aims,—saw everlasting days
Before him dawning rise, in which to achieve
All glorious things, and get himself the name
That jealous Death too soon forbade on earth.

Old things had passed away, and all was new:
And yet of all the new-begun, nought so
Prodigious difference made, in the affairs
And thoughts of every man, as certainty.
For doubt, all doubt was gone, of every kind;
Doubt that erewhile, beneath the lowest base
Of moral reasonings, deepest laid, crept in,
And made the strongest, best cemented towers
Of human workmanship, so weakly shake,
And to their lofty tops so waver still,
That those who built them, feared their sudden fall.
But doubt, all doubt was past; and in its place,
To every thought that in the heart of man
Was present, now had come an absolute,
Unquestionable certainty, which gave
To each decision of the mind, immense
Importance, raising to its proper height
The sequent tide of passion, whether joy
Or grief. The good man knew, in very truth,
That he was saved to all eternity,
And feared no more; the bad had proof complete
That he was damned for ever; and believed
Entirely, that on every wicked soul
Anguish should come, and wrath and utter woe.

Knowledge was much increased, but wisdom more.
The film of Time, that still before the sight
Of mortal vision danced, and led the best
Astray, pursuing unsubstantial dreams,
Had dropped from every eye: men saw that they
Had vexed themselves in vain, to understand
What now no hope to understand remained;
That they had often counted evil good,
And good for ill; laughed when they should have wept,
And wept forlorn when God intended mirth.
But what of all their follies past, surprised

Digitized by Google

Them most, and seemed most totally insane
And unaccountable, was value set
On objects of a day; was serious grief,
Or joy, for loss, or gain of mortal things;
So utterly impossible it seemed,
When men their proper interest saw, that aught
Of terminable kind, that aught which e'er
Could die, or cease to be, however named,
Should make a human soul, a legal heir
Of everlasting years, rejoice or weep
In earnest mood; for nothing now seemed worth
A thought, but had eternal bearing in't.

Much truth had been assented to in Time,
Which never, till this day, had made a due
Impression on the heart. Take one example;
Early from heaven it was revealed, and oft
Repeated in the world, from pulpits preached,
And penned and read in holy books, that God
Respected not the persons of mankind.
Had this been truly credited and felt,
The king, in purple robe, had owned, indeed,
The beggar for his brother; pride of rank
And office thawed into paternal love;
Oppression feared the day of equal rights,
Predicted; covetous extortion kept
In mind the hour of reckoning, soon to come;
And bribed injustice thought of being judged,
When he should stand on equal foot beside
The man he wronged. And surely—nay, 'tis true,
Most true, beyond all whispering of doubt,
That he, who lifted up the reeking scourge,
Dripping with gore from the slave's back, before
He struck again, had paused, and seriously
Of that tribunal thought, where God himself
Should look him in the face, and ask in wrath,
Why didst thou this? Man! was he not thy brother?
Bone of thy bone, and flesh and blood of thine?
But ah! this truth, by heaven and reason taught,
Was never fully credited on earth.
The titled, flattered, lofty men of power,
Whose wealth bought verdicts of applause for deeds
Of wickedness, could ne'er believe the time
Should truly come, when judgment should proceed
Impartially against them, and they, too,
Have no good speaker at the Judge's ear,
No witnesses to bring them off for gold,
No power to turn the sentence from its course;
And they of low estate, who saw themselves,
Day after day, despised, and wronged, and mocked,
Without redress, could scarcely think the day
Should e'er arrive, when they in truth should stand
On perfect level with the potentates
And princes of the earth, and have their cause
Examined fairly, and their rights allowed.
But now this truth was felt, believed and felt,
That men were really of a common stock;
That no man ever had been more than man.

Much prophecy—revealed by holy bards,
Who sung the will of heaven by Judah's streams—
Much prophecy that waited long, the scoff
Of lips uncircumcised, was then fulfilled;
To the last tittle scrupulously fulfilled.
It was foretold by those of ancient days,
A time should come, when wickedness should weep
Abashed; when every lofty look of man
Should be bowed down, and all his haughtiness
Made low; when righteousness alone should lift
The head in glory, and rejoice at heart;
When many, first in splendour and renown,
Should be most vile; and many, lowest once
And last in poverty's obscurest nook,
Highest and first in honour should be seen,
Exalted; and when some, when all the good,
Should rise to glory, and eternal life;
And all the bad, lamenting, wake, condemned
To shame, contempt, and everlasting grief.

These prophecies had tarried long; so long
That many wagged the head, and, taunting, asked,
When shall they come? But asked nor more, nor mocked:
For the reproach of prophecy was wiped
Away, and every word of God found true.

And O! what change of state! what change of rank!
In that assembly every where was seen!
The humble-hearted laughed; the lofty mourned;
And every man according to his works
Wrought in the body, there took character.

Thus stood they mixed! all generations stood
Of all mankind! innumerable throng!
Great harvest of the grave! waiting the will
Of Heaven, attentively and silent all,
As forest spreading out beneath the calm
Of evening skies, when even the single leaf
Is heard distinctly rustle down and fall;
So silent they, when from above, the sound
Of rapid wheels approached, and suddenly
In heaven appeared a host of angels strong,
With chariots and with steeds of burning fire:
Cherub, and Seraph, Thrones, Dominions, Powers,
Bright in celestial armour, dazzling, rode:
And leading in the front, illustrious shone
Michael and Gabriel, servants long approved
In high commission,—girt that day with power,
Which nought created, man or devil, might
Resist: nor waited gazing long; but quick
Descending, silently and without song,
As servants bent to do their master's work,
To middle air they raised the human race,
Above the path long travelled by the sun;
And as a shepherd from the sheep divides
The goats; or husbandman, with reaping bands,
In harvest, separates the precious wheat,
Selected from the tares: so did they part
Mankind,—the good and bad, to right and left,—
To meet no more; these ne'er again to smile;
Nor those to weep; these never more to share
Society of mercy with the saints;
Nor, henceforth, those to suffer with the vile.
Strange parting! not for hours, nor days, nor months,
Nor for ten thousand times ten thousand years,
But for a whole eternity! though fit.

Digitized by Google

And pleasant to the righteous, yet to all
Strange and most strangely felt! The sire, to right
Retiring, saw the son, sprung from his loins,
Beloved how dearly once—but who forgot,
Too soon, in sin's intoxicating cup,
The father's warnings and the mother's tears—
Fall to the left among the reprobate.
And sons redeemed, beheld the fathers, whom
They loved and honoured once, gathered among
The wicked: brothers, sisters, kinsmen, friends;
Husband and wife, who ate at the same board,
And under the same roof, united, dwelt,
From youth to hoary age, bearing the chance
And change of time together,—parted then
For evermore. But none whose friendship grew
From virtue's pure and everlasting root,
Took different roads;—these, knit in stricter bonds
Of amity, embracing, saw no more
Death with his scythe stand by, nor heard the word,
The bitter word, which closed all earthly friendships,
And finished every feast of love—Farewell.
To all, strange parting! to the wicked, sad
And terrible! new horror seized them while
They saw the saints withdrawing, and with them
All hope of safety, all delay of wrath.

Beneath a crown of rosy light,—like that
Which once in Goshen, on the flocks, and herds,
And dwellings, smiled, of Jacob, while the land
Of Nile was dark; or like the pillar bright
Of sacred fire, that stood above the sons
Of Israel, when they camped at midnight by
The foot of Horeb, or the desert side
Of Sinai,—now the righteous took their place,
All took their place, who ever wished to go
To heaven, for heaven's own sake; not one remained
Among the accursed, that e'er desired with all
The heart to be redeemed; that ever sought
Submissively to do the will of God,
Howe'er it crossed his own: or to escape
Hell, for aught other than its penal fires.
All took their place rejoicing, and beheld,
In centre of the crown of golden beams
That canopied them o'er, these gracious words,
Blushing with tints of love:—Fear not, my saints.

To other sight of horrible dismay,
Jehovah's ministers, the wicked drove,
And left them bound immoveable in chains
Of Justice: o'er their heads a bowless cloud
Of indignation hung: a cloud it was
Of thick and utter darkness; rolling, like
An ocean, tides of livid, pitchy flame;
With thunders charged, and lightnings ruinous,
And red with forked vengeance, such as wounds
The soul; and full of angry shapes of wrath;
And eddies, whirling with tumultuous fire;
And forms of terror raving to and fro;
And monsters, unimagined heretofore
By guilty men in dreams before their death,
From horrid to more horrid changing still,
In hideous movement through that stormy gulf:
And evermore the thunders, murmuring, spoke
From out the darkness, uttering loud these words
Which every guilty conscience echoed back:
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
Dread words! that barred excuse, and threw the weight
Of every man's perdition on himself
Directly home. Dread words! heard then, and heard
For ever through the wastes of Erebus.
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!"
These were the words which glowed upon the sword,
Whose wrath burned fearfully behind the cursed,
As they were driven away from God to Tophet
"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not!"
These are the words to which the harps of grief
Are strung; and to the chorus of the damned,
The rocks of hell repeat them evermore;
Loud echoed through the caverns of despair,
And poured in thunder on the ear of Woe.

Nor ruined men alone, beneath that cloud,
Trembled: there Satan and his legions stood:
Satan the first and eldest sinner, bound
For judgment: he, by other name, held once
Conspicuous rank in heaven among the sons
Of happiness, rejoicing day and night:
But pride, that was ashamed to bow to God
Most high, his bosom filled with hate, his face
Made black with envy, and in his soul begot
Thoughts guilty of rebellion 'gainst the throne
Of the Eternal Father and the Son,—
From everlasting built on righteousness.

Ask not how pride, in one created pure,
Could grow; or sin without example spring,
Where holiness alone was sown: esteem 't
Enough, that he, as every being made
By God, was made entirely holy, had
The will of God before him set for law
And regulation of his life; and power
To do as bid; but was, meantime, left free,
To prove his worth, his gratitude, his love;
How proved besides? for how could service done,
That might not else have been withheld, evince
The will to serve, which, rather than the deed,
God doth require, and virtue counts alone?
To stand or fall, to do or leave undone,
Is reason's lofty privilege, denied
To all below, by instinct bound to fate,
Unmeriting alike reward or blame.

Thus free, the Devil chose to disobey
The will of God; and was thrown out from heaven,
And with him all his bad example stained:
Yet not to utter punishment decreed,
But left to fill the measure of his sin,
In tempting and seducing man—too soon,
Too easily seduced! And from the day,
He first set foot on earth—of rancour full,
And pride, and hate, and malice, and revenge—
He set himself, with most felonious aim,
And hellish perseverance, to root out
All good, and in its place to plant all ill;
To rub and raze, from all created things,
The fair and holy portraiture divine,
And on them to restamp his features grim.

Digitized by Google

To draw all creatures off from loyalty
To their Creator; and to make them bow
The knee to him. Nor failed of great success,
As populous hell this day can testify.
He held indeed large empire in the world,
Contending proudly with the King of heaven.
To him temples were built, and sacrifice
Of costly blood upon his altars flowed;
And, what best pleased him, for in show he seemed
Then likest God, whole notions bowing fell
Before him, worshipping, and from his lips
Entreated oracles, which he, by priests—
For many were his priests in every age—
Answered, though guessing but at future things,
And erring oft, yet still believed; so well
His ignorance, in ambiguous phrase, he veiled.

Nor needs it wonder, that with man once fallen,
His tempting should succeed. Large was his mind
And understanding; though impaired by sin,
Still large; and constant practice, day and night,
In cunning, guile, and all hypocrisy,
From age to age, gave him experience vast
In sin's dark tactics, such as boyish man,
Unarmed by strength divine, could ill withstand.
And well he knew his weaker side; and still
His lures with baits that pleased the senses busked;
To his impatient passions offering terms
Of present joy, and bribing reason's eye
With earthly wealth, and honours near at hand;
Nor failed to misadvise his future hope
And faith, by false unkerneled promises
Of heavens of sensual gluttony and love,
That suited best their grosser appetites.
Into the sinner's heart, who lived secure,
And feared him least, he entered at his will.
But chief he chose his residence in courts,
And conclaves, stirring princes up to acts
Of blood and tyranny; and moving priests
To barter truth, and swap the souls of men
For lusty benefices, and address
Of lofty sounding. Nor the saints elect,
Who walked with God, in virtue's path sublime,
Did he not sometimes venture to molest;
In dreams and moments of unguarded thought,
Suggesting guilty doubts and fears, that God
Would disappoint their hope; and in their way
Bestrewing pleasures, tongued so sweet, and so
In holy garb arrayed, that many stooped,
Believing them of heavenly sort, and fell;
And to their high professions, brought disgrace
And scandal; to themselves, thereafter, long
And bitter nights of sore repentance, vexed
With shame, unwonted sorrow, and remorse.
And more they should have fallen, and more have wept,
Had not their guardian angels,—who, by God
Commissioned, stood beside them in the hour
Of danger, whether craft, or fierce attack,
To Satan's deepest skill opposing skill
More deep, and to his strongest arm, an arm
More strong,—upborne them in their hands, and filled
Their souls with all discernment, quick, to pierce
His stratagems and fairest shows of sin.

Now, like a roaring lion, up and down
The world, destroying, though unseen, ne raged:
And now, retiring back to Tartarus,
Far back, beneath the thick of guiltiest dark,
Where night ne'er heard of day, in council grim
He sat, with ministers whose thoughts were damned,
And there such plans devised, as, had not God
Checked and restrained, had added earth entire
To hell, and uninhabited left heaven,
Jehovah unadored. Nor unsevere,
Even then, his punishment deserved: the Worm
That never dies, coiled in his bosom, gnawed
Perpetually; sin after sin, brought pang
Succeeding pang; and now and then the bolts
Of Zion's King, vindictive, smote his soul
With fiery woe to blast his proud designs:
And gave him earnest of the wrath to come.
And chief, when on the cross, Messiah said,
"'Tis finished," did the edge of vengeance smite
Him through, and all his gloomy legions touch
With new despair. But yet, to be the first
In mischief, to have armies at his call,
To hold dispute with God, in days of Time
His pride and malice fed, and bore him up
Above the worst of ruin: still, to plan
And act great deeds, tho' wicked, brought at least
The recompense which nature hath attached
To all activity, and aim pursued
With perseverance, good, or bad; for as,
By nature's laws, immutable and just,
Enjoyment stops where indolence begins,
And purposeless, to-morrow borrowing sloth,
Itself, heaps on its shoulders loads of woe,
Too heavy to be borne; so industry,—
To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,
Which in itself is good—as surely brings
Reward of good, no matter what be done:
And such reward the Devil had, as long
As the decrees eternal gave him space
To work: but now, all action ceased; his hope
Of doing evil perished quite; his pride,
His courage, failed him; and beneath that cloud,
Which hung its central terrors o'er his head,
With all his angels, he, for sentence, stood,
And rolled his eyes around, that uttered guilt
And woe, in horrible perfection joined.
As he had been the chief and leader, long,
Of the apostate crew that warred with God
And holiness; so now, among the bad,
Lowest, and most forlorn, and trembling most,
With all iniquity deformed and foul,
With all perdition ruinous and dark,
He stood,—example awful of the wrath
Of God! sad mark, to which all sin must fall!—
And made, on every side, so black a hell,
That spirits, used to night and misery,
To distance drew, and looked another way;
And from their golden cloud, far off, the saints
Saw round him darkness grow more dark, and heard
The impatient thunderbolts, with deadliest crash,
And frequentest, break o'er his head,—the sign,
That Satan there, the vilest sinner, stood.

Ah me! what eyes were there beneath that cloud!
Eyes of despair, final and certain! eyes

Digitized by Google

That looked, and looked, and saw, where'er they looked,
Interminable darkness! utter woe!

'Twas pitiful to see the early flower
Nipped by the unfeeling frost, just when it rose,
Lovely in youth, and put its beauties on.
'Twas pitiful to see the hopes of all
The year, the yellow harvest, made a heap,
By rains of judgment; or by torrents swept,
With flocks and cattle, down the raging flood;
Or scattered by the winnowing winds, that bore,
Upon their angry wings, the wrath of heaven.
Sad was the field, where yesterday was heard
The roar of war; and sad the sight of maid,
Of mother, widow, sister, daughter, wife,
Stooping and weeping over senseless, cold,
Defaced, and mangled lumps of breathless earth,
Which had been husbands, fathers, brothers, sons,
And lovers, when that morning's sun arose.
'Twas sad to see the wonted seat of friend
Removed by death: and sad to visit scenes,
When old, where, in the smiling morn of life,
Lived many, who both knew and loved us much,
And they all gone, dead, or dispersed abroad;
And stranger faces seen among their hills.
'Twas sad to see the little orphan babe
Weeping and sobbing on its mother's grave.
'Twas pitiful to see an old, forlorn,
Decrepit, withered wretch, unhoused, unclad,
Starving to death with poverty and cold.
'Twas pitiful to see a blooming bride,
That promise gave of many a happy year,
Touched by decay, turn pale, and waste, and die.
'Twas pitiful to hear the murderous thrust
Of ruffian's blade that sought the life entire.
'Twas sad to hear the blood come gurgling forth
From out the throat of the wild suicide.
Sad was the sight of widowed, childless age
Weeping. I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot, no voice, was heard within; none came
To meet him, where he oft had met a wife,
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return;
None came to meet him; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family; and now
He stood in solitude, in solitude
Wide as the world; for all that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever strayed his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope, that touched his soul
With bitter thoughts, and told him all was past.
His lonely cot was silent; and he looked
As if he could not enter; on his staff,
Bending, he leaned; and from his weary eye,
Distressing sight! a single tear-drop wept:
None followed, for the fount of tears was dry;
Alone and last it fell from wrinkle down
To wrinkle, till it lost itself, drunk by
The withered cheek, on which again no smile
Should come, or drop of tenderness be seen.
This sight was very pitiful; but one
Was sadder still, the saddest seen in Time:
A man, to-day the glory of his kind,
In reason clear, in understanding large,
In judgment sound, in fancy quick, in hope
Abundant, and in promise, like a field
Well cultured, and refreshed with dews from God;
To-morrow, chained, and raving mad, and whipped
By servile hands; sitting on dismal straw,
And gnashing with his teeth against the chain,
The iron chain that bound him hand and foot:
And trying whiles to send his glaring eye
Beyond the wide circumference of his woe;
Or, humbling more, more miserable still,
Giving an idiot laugh, that served to show
The blasted scenery of his horrid face;
Calling the straw his sceptre, and the stone,
On which he pinioned sat, his royal throne.
Poor, poor, poor man! fallen far below the brute!
His reason strove in vain to find her way,
Lost in the stormy desert of his brain;
And being active still, she wrought all strange,
Fantastic, execrable, monstrous things.

All these were sad, and thousands more, that sleep
Forgotten beneath the funeral pall of Time;
And bards, as well became, bewailed them much,
With doleful instruments of weeping song.
But what were these? what might be worse, had in't,
However small, some grains of happiness:
And man ne'er drank a cup of earthly sort,
That might not held another drop of gall;
Or, in his deepest sorrow, laid his head
Upon a pillow, set so close with thorns,
That might not held another prickle still.
Accordingly, the saddest human look
Had hope in't; faint indeed, but still 'twas hope.
But why excuse the misery of earth!
Say it was dismal, cold, and dark, and deep,
Beyond the utterance of strongest words:
But say that none remembered it, who saw
The eye of beings damned for evermore!
Rolling, and rolling, and rolling still in vain,
To find some ray, to see beyond the gulf
Of an unavenued, fierce, fiery, hot,
Interminable, dark Futurity!
And rolling still, and rolling still in vain!

Thus stood the reprobate beneath the shade
Of terror, and beneath the crown of love,
The good; and there was silence in the vault
Of heaven: and as they stood and listened, they heard,
Afar to left, among the utter dark,
Hell rolling o'er his waves of burning fire,
And thundering through his caverns, empty then
As if he preparation made, to act
The final vengeance of the Fiery Lamb.
And here was heard, coming from out the Pit,
The hollow wailing of Eternal Death,
And horrid cry of the Undying Worm.

The wicked paler turned; and scarce the good
Their colour kept; but were not long dismayed.
That moment, in the heavens, how wondrous fair!

Digitized by Google

The angel of Mercy stood, and, on the bad,
Turning his back, over the ransomed threw
His bow bedropped with imagery of love,
And promises on which their faith reclined.
Throughout, deep, breathless silence reigned again;
And on the circuit of the upper spheres,
A glorious seraph stood, and cried aloud,
That every ear of man and devil heard:
"Him that is filthy, let be filthy still;
Him that is holy, let be holy still."
And suddenly, another squadron bright,
Of high arch-angel glory, stooping, brought
A marvellous bow; one base upon the Cross,
The other, on the shoulder of the Bear,
They placed, from south to north, spanning the heavens,
And on each hand dividing good and bad,—
Who read on either side these burning words,
Which ran along the arch in living fire,
And wanted not to be believed in full:
"As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day."

BOOK X.

ANALYSIS.

The author invokes God, for acceptance, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit; that he may faithfully interpret the notes of the ancient Bard, "the holy numbers" which his spirit hears, and describe the Day of Judgment.

Suddenly Michael sounds the golden trumpet, and millions, infinite, of the holy spirits gathered from heaven as well as from the farthest worlds around, and met at the Eternal throne; and from a radiant cloud, God declares the purpose of the assembly. He states the destiny of man is concluded, the day of Retribution, appointed from all eternity, is come, and the generations of earth collected to the place of judgment.

The Father infinite then addresses the Messiah, and assigns to him his covenant office of Judge. The Son, taking the book of remembrance, the seven last thunders, the crowns of life, and the Sword of Justice, ascends the living Chariot of God, attended by numbers infinite, moves forward in glory, becomes visible to the sons of men, and ascends the Throne, placed between the good and bad.

In awful silence a mighty angel spread open the book of God's remembrance, and each one with sincere conscience attests the record true. He arose to pronounce the sentence. No creature breathed, every sphere and star stood still and listened, and upon the wicked first he issued the dread decree; and plunged the sword, which now he drew, into the midst; they sink into final misery, into utter darkness and irremediable woe.—The fire then consumed the earth. Lastly the righteous receive the crowns, and a joyous approval, and ascend to heaven with their judge, singing glory to God and to the Lamb.

God of my fathers! holy, just, and good!
My God! my Father! my unfailing Hope!
Jehovah! let the incense of my praise,
Accepted, burn before thy mercy seat,
And in thy presence burn, both day and night.
Maker! Preserver! my Redeemer! God!
Whom have I in the heavens but Thee alone?
On earth, but Thee, whom should I praise, whom love?
For thou hast brought me hitherto, upheld
By thy omnipotence; and from thy grace—
Unbought, unmerited, though not unsought—
The wells of thy salvation, hast refreshed
My spirit; watering it, at morn and even!
And by thy Spirit, which thou freely givest
To whom thou wilt, hast led my venturous song,
Over the vale, and mountain tract, the light
And shade of man; into the burning deep
Descending now, and now circling the mount
Where highest sits Divinity enthroned;
Rolling along the tide of fluent thought,
The tide of moral, natural, divine;
Gazing on past, and present, and again,
On rapid pinion borne, outstripping Time,
In long excursion, wandering through the groves
Unfading, and the endless avenues
That shade the landscape of eternity;
And talking there with holy angels met,
And future men, in glorious vision seen!
Nor unrewarded have I watched at night,
And heard the drowsy sound of neighbouring sleep.
New thought, new imagery, new scenes of bliss
And glory, unrehearsed by mortal tongue,
Which, unrevealed, I, trembling, turned and left,
Bursting at once upon my ravished eye,
With joy unspeakable, have filled my soul,
And made my cup run over with delight;
Though in my face, the blasts of adverse winds,
While boldly circumnavigating man,
Winds seeming adverse, though perhaps not so,
Have beat severely—disregarded beat,
When I behind me heard the voice of God,
And his propitious Spirit say,—Fear not.

God of my fathers! ever present God!
This offering more inspire, sustain, accept;
Highest, if numbers answer to the theme;
Best answering if thy Spirit dictate most.
Jehovah! breathe upon my soul; my heart
Enlarge; my faith increase; increase my hope.
My thoughts exalt; my fancy sanctify,
And all my passions, that I near thy throne
May venture, unreproved; and sing the day,
Which none unholy ought to name, the Day
Of Judgment; greatest day, past or to come;
Day, which—deny me what thou wilt; deny
Me home, or friend, or honourable name—
Thy mercy grant, I, thoroughly prepared,
With comely garment of redeeming love,
May meet, and have my Judge for Advocate.

Come, gracious Influence! Breath of the Lord!
And touch me, trembling, as thou touched the man,
Greatly beloved, when he in vision saw,
By Ulai's stream, the Ancient sit; and talked
With Gabriel, to his prayer swiftly sent,

Digitized by Google

At evening sacrifice. Hold my right hand,
Almighty! hear me—for I ask through Him,
Whom thou hast heard, whom thou wilt always hear,
Thy Son, our interceding Great High Priest.
Reveal the future; let the years to come
Pass by; and open my ear to hear the harp;
The prophet harp, whose wisdom I repeat,
Interpreting the voice of distant song.—
Which thus again resumes the lofty verse;
Loftiest, if I interpret faithfully
The holy numbers which my spirit hears.

Thus came the day—the Harp again began—
The day that many thought should never come;
That all the wicked wished should never come;
That all the righteous had expected long;
Day greatly feared, and yet too little feared
By him who feared it most; day laughed at much
By the profane; the trembling day of all
Who laughed; day when all shadows passed, all dreams;
When substance, when reality commenced.
Last day of lying, final day of all
Deceit, all knavery, all quackish phrase;
Ender of all disputing, of all mirth
Ungodly, of all loud and boasting speech.
Judge of all judgments; Judge of every judge;
Adjuster of all causes, rights and wrongs.
Day oft appealed to, and appealed to oft
By those who saw its dawn with saddest heart:
Day most magnificent in Fancy's range,
Whence she returned, confounded, trembling, pale,
With overmuch of glory faint and blind:
Day most important held, prepared for most,
By every rational, wise, and holy man:
Day of eternal gain, for worldly loss:
Day of eternal loss, for worldly gain.
Great day of terror, vengeance, woe, despair!
Revealer of all secrets, thoughts, desires!
Rein-trying, heart-investigating day,
Which stood between Eternity and Time,
Reviewed all past, determined all to come,
And bound all destinies for evermore.
Believing day of unbelief! Great day!
Which set in proper light the affairs of earth,
And justified the government Divine.
Great day! what can we more? what should we more?
Great triumph day of God's Incarnate Son!
Great day of glory to the Almighty God!
Day whence the everlasting years begin
Their date! new era in eternity!
And oft referred to in the song of heaven!

Thus stood the apostate, thus the ransomed stood;
Those held by justice fast, and these by love,
Reading the fiery scutcheonry, that blazed
On high, upon the great celestial bow:—
"As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day."
All read, all understood, and all believed;
Convinced of judgment, righteousness, and sin.
Meantime the universe throughout was still:
The cope, above and round about, was calm:
And, motionless, beneath them lay the earth,
Silent and sad, as one that sentence waits,
For flagrant crime: when suddenly was heard
Behind the azure vaulting of the sky,
Above, and far remote from reach of sight,
The sound of trumpets and the sound of crowds,
And prancing steeds, and rapid chariot wheels,
That from four quarters rolled, and seemed in haste,
Assembling at some place of rendezvous:
And so they seemed to roll, with furious speed,
As if none meant to be behind the first.
Nor seemed alone: that day the golden trump,
Whose voice from centre to circumference
Of all created things, is heard distinct,
God had bid Michael sound to summon all
The hosts of bliss to presence of their King,
And, all the morning, millions infinite,
That millions governed each, Dominions, Powers
Thrones, Principalities, with all their hosts,
Had been arriving, near the capital,
And royal city, New Jerusalem,
From heaven's remotest bounds: nor yet from heaven
Alone came they that day: the worlds around,
Or neighbouring nearest on the verge of night,
Emptied, sent forth their whole inhabitants:
All tribes of being came, of every name,
From every coast, filling Jehovah's courts.
From morn till mid-day, in the squadrons poured
Immense, along the bright celestial roads.
Swiftly they rode; for love unspeakable
To God, and to Messiah, Prince of Peace,
Drew them, and made obedience haste to be
Approved. And now before the Eternal Throne-
Brighter that day than when the Son prepared
To overthrow the seraphim rebelled—
And circling round the mount of Deity,
Upon the sea of glass, all round about,
And down the borders of the stream of life,
And over all the plains of Paradise,
For many a league of heavenly measurement,
Assembled, stood the immortal multitudes.
Millions above all numbers infinite,
The nations of the blest. Distinguished each,
By chief of goodly stature blazing far,
By various garb, and flag of various hue
Streaming through heaven from standard lifted high,—
The arms and imagery of thousand worlds.
Distinguished each; but all arrayed complete,
In armour bright, of helmet, shield, and sword.
And mounted all in chariots of fire.
A military throng, blent, not confused:
As soldiers on some day of great review,
Burning in splendour of refulgent gold,
And ornament on purpose long devised
For this expected day. Distinguished each,
But all accoutred as became their Lord,
And high occasion; all in holiness,
The livery of the soldiery of God,
Vested; and shining all with perfect bliss,
The wages which his faithful servants win.

Thus stood they numberless around the mount
Of presence; and, adoring, waited, hushed
In deepest silence, for the voice of God.
That moment, all the Sacred Hill on high
Burned, terrible with glory, and behind
The uncreated lustre hid the Lamb,

Digitized by Google

Invisible; when, from the radiant cloud,
This voice, addressing all the hosts of heaven,
Proceeded; not in words as we converse,
Each with his fellow, but in language such
As God doth use, imparting, without phrase
Successive, what, in speech of creatures, seems
Long narrative, though long, yet losing much,
In feeble symbols, of the thought Divine.

My servants long approved, my faithful sons!
Angels of glory, Thrones, Dominions, Powers!
Well pleased, this morning, I have seen the speed
Of your obedience, gathering round my throne,
In order due, and well-becoming garb;
Illustrious, as I see, beyond your wont,
As was my wish, to glorify this day:
And now what your assembling means, attend.

This day concludes the destiny of man;
The hour, appointed from eternity,
To judge the earth, in righteousness, is come;
To end the war of Sin, that long has fought,
Permitted, against the sword of Holiness:
To give to men and devils, as their works,
Recorded in my all-remembering book,
I find; good to the good, and great reward
Of everlasting honour, joy, and peace,
Before my presence here for evermore:
And to the evil, as their sins provoke,
Eternal recompense of shame and woe,
Cast out beyond the bounds of light and love.

Long have I stood, as ye, my sons, well know,
Between the cherubim, and stretched my arms
Of mercy out, inviting all to come
To me, and live; my bowels long have moved
With great compassion; and my justice passed
Transgression by, and not imputed sin.
Long here, upon my everlasting throne,
I have beheld my love and mercy scorned;
Have seen my laws despised, my name blasphemed,
My providence accused, my gracious plans
Opposed; and long, too long, have I beheld
The wicked triumph, and my saints reproached
Maliciously, while on my altars lie,
Unanswered still, their prayers and their tears,
Which seek my coming, wearied with delay:
And long, Disorder in my moral reign
Has walked rebelliously, disturbed the peace
Of my eternal government, and wrought
Confusion, spreading far and wide, among
My works inferior, which groan to be
Released. Nor long shall groan: the hour of grace,
The final hour of grace is fully past.
The time accepted for repentance, faith,
And pardon, is irrevocably past,
And Justice, unaccompanied, as wont,
With Mercy, now goes forth, to give to all
According to their deeds. Justice alone;
For why should Mercy any more be joined?
What hath not mercy, mixed with judgment, done,
That mercy, mixed with judgment and reproof,
Could do? Did I not revelation make,
Plainly and clearly, of my will entire?
Before them set my holy law, and gave
Them knowlege, wisdom, prowess, to obey,
And win, by self-wrought works, eternal life?
Rebelled, did I not send them terms of peace,
Which, not my justice, but my mercy asked?—
Terms costly to my well-beloved Son;
To them gratuitous; exacting faith
Alone for pardon, works evincing faith?
Have I not early risen, and sent my seers,
Prophets, apostles, teachers, ministers,
With signs and wonders, working in my name?
Have I not still, from age to age, raised up,
As I saw needful, great, religious men,
Gifted by me with large capacity,
And by my arm omnipotent upheld,
To pour the numbers of my mercy forth,
And roll my judgments on the ear of man?
And lastly, when the promised hour was come—
What more could most abundant mercy do?—
Did I not send Immanuel forth, my Son,
Only begotten, to purchase, by his blood.
As many as believed upon his name?
Did he not die to give repentance, such
As I accept, and pardon of all sins?
Has he not taught, beseeched, and shed abroad
The Spirit unconfined, and given, at times,
Example fierce of wrath and judgment, poured
Vindictively on nations guilty long?
What means of reformation that my Son
Has left behind untried? what plainer words,
What arguments more strong, as yet remain?
Did he not tell them with his lips of truth,—
The righteous should be saved, the wicked, damned?
And has he not, awake both day and night,
Here interceded with prevailing voice,
At my right hand, pleading his precious blood
Which magnified my holy law, and bought,
For all who wished, perpetual righteousness?
And have not you, my faithful servants, all
Been frequent forth, obedient to my will,
With messages of mercy and of love,
Administering my gifts to sinful man?
And have not all my mercy, all my love,
Been sealed and stamped with signature of heaven?
By proof of wonders, miracles, and signs
Attested, and attested more by truth
Divine, inherent in the tidings sent?
This day declares the consequence of all.
Some have believed, are sanctified, and saved,
Prepared for dwelling in this holy place,
In these their mansions, built before my face;
And now beneath a crown of golden light,
Beyond our wall, at place of judgment, they,
Expecting, wait the promised due reward.
The others stand with Satan bound in chains;
The others, who refused to be redeemed,—
They stand, unsanctified, unpardoned, sad,
Waiting the sentence that shall fix their woe.
The others who refused to be redeemed;
For all had grace sufficient to believe,
All who my gospel heard; and none who heard
It not, shall by its law this day be tried.
Necessity of sinning, my decrees
Imposed on none; but rather all inclined
To holiness; and grace was bountiful,
Abundant, overflowing with my word;
My word of life and peace, which to all men
Who shall or stand or fall, by law revealed.

Digitized by Google

Was offered freely, as 'twas freely sent,
Without all money, and without all price.
Thus, they have all, by willing act, despised
Me, and my Son, and sanctifying Spirit.
But now no longer shall they mock or scorn:
The day of Grace and Mercy is complete,
And Godhead from their Misery absolved.

So saying, He, the Father infinite,
Turning, addressed Messiah, where he sat
Exalted gloriously, at his right hand.
This day belongs to justice, and to Thee,
Eternal Son! thy right for service done
Abundantly fulfilling all my will;
By promise thine, from all eternity,
Made in the ancient Covenant of Grace;
And thine, as most befitting, since in thee
Divine and human meet, impartial Judge,
Consulting thus the interest of both.
Go then, my Son, divine similitude!
Image express of Deity unseen!
The book of my remembrance take; and take
The golden crowns of life, due to the saints;
And take the seven last thunders ruinous;
Thy armour take; gird on thy sword, thy sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now
Unsheathed, in thy eternal armoury;
And mount the living chariot of God.
Thou goest not now, as once to Calvary,
To be insulted, buffeted, and slain:
Thou goest not now with battle, and the voice
Of war, as once against the rebel hosts:
Thou goest a Judge, and find'st the guilty bound:
Thou goest to prove, condemn, acquit, reward;
Not unaccompanied; all these, my saints,
Go with thee, glorious retinue! to sing
Thy triumph, and participate thy joy;
And I, the Omnipresent, with thee go;
And with thee, all the glory of my throne.

Thus said the Father; and the Son beloved,
Omnipotent, Omniscient, Fellow God,
Arose resplendent with Divinity;
And He the book of God's remembrance took;
And took the seven last thunders ruinous;
And took the crowns of life, due to the saints;
His armour took; girt on his sword, his sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now
Unsheathed, in the eternal armoury;
And up the living chariot of God
Ascended, signifying all complete.

And now the Trump of wonderous melody,
By man or angel never heard before,
Sounded with thunder, and the march began—
Not swift, as cavalcade, on battle bent,
But, as became procession of a judge,
Solemn, magnificent, majestic, slow:
Moving sublime with glory infinite,
And numbers infinite, and awful song.
They passed the gate of heaven, which many a league
Opened either way, to let the glory forth
Of this great march. And now the sons of men
Beheld their coming, which, before, they heard;
Beheld the glorious countenance of God!
All light was swallowed up, all objects seen,
Faded: and the Incarnate, visible
Alone, held every eye upon Him fixed!
The wicked saw his majesty severe,
And those who pierced Him, saw his face with clouds
Of glory circled round, essential bright!
And to the rocks and mountains called in vain,
To hide them from the fierceness of his wrath:
Almighty power their flight restrained, and held
Them bound immoveable before the bar.

The righteous, undismayed and bold—best proof
This day of fortitude sincere—sustained
By inward faith, with acclamations loud,
Received the coming of the Son of Man;
And, drawn by love, inclined to his approach,
Moving to meet the brightness of his face.

Meantime, 'tween good and bad, the Judge his wheels
Stayed, and, ascending, sat upon the great
White Throne, that morning founded there by power
Omnipotent, and built on righteousness
And truth. Behind, before, on every side,
In native, and reflected blaze of bright
Celestial equipage, the myriads stood,
That with his marching came; rank above rank
Rank above rank, with shield and flaming sword

'Twas silence all: and quick, on right and left,
A mighty angel spread the book of God's
Remembrance; and, with conscience now sincere
All men compared the record written there,
By finger of Omniscience, and received
Their sentence, in themselves, of joy or woe;
Condemned or justified, while yet the Judge,
Waited, as if to let them prove themselves.
The righteous, in the book of life displayed,
Rejoicing, read their names; rejoicing, read
Their faith for righteousness received, and deeds
Of holiness, as proof of faith complete.
The wicked, in the book of endless death,
Spread out to left, bewailing read their names:
And read beneath them, Unbelief, and fruit
Of unbelief, vile, unrepented deeds,
Now unrepentable for evermore;
And gave approval of the woe affixed.

This done, the Omnipotent, Omniscient Judge
Rose infinite, the sentence to pronounce,
The sentence of eternal woe or bliss!
All glory heretofore seen or conceived;
All majesty, annihilated, dropped,
That moment, from remembrance, and was lost
And silence, deepest hitherto esteemed,
Seemed noisy to the stillness of this hour.
Comparisons I seek not; nor should find,
If sought: that silence, which all being held,
When God's Almighty Son, from off the walls
Of heaven the rebel angels threw, accursed,
So still, that all creation heard their fall
Distinctly, in the lake of burning fire,—
Was now forgotten, and every silence else.
All being rational, created then,
Around the judgment seat, intensely listened:
No creature breathed: man, angel, devil, stood
And listened; the spheres stood still, and every star

Digitized by Google

Stood still and listened; and every particle
Remotest in the womb of matter stood,
Bending to hear, devotional and still.
And thus upon the wicked first, the Judge
Pronounced the sentence, written before of old;
"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the fire
Prepared eternal in the Gulf of Hell,
Where ye shall weep and wail for evermore;
Reaping the harvest which your sins have sown."

So saying, God grew dark with utter wrath:
And drawing now the sword, undrawn before,
Which through the range of infinite, all around,
A gleam of fiery indignation threw,
He lifted up his hand omnipotent,
And down among the damned the burning edge
Plunged; and from forth his arrowy quiver sent,
Emptied, the seven last thunders ruinous,
Which, entering, withered all their souls with fire.
Then first was vengeance, first was ruin seen!
Red, unrestrained, vindictive, final, fierce!
They, howling, fled to west among the dark;
But fled not these the terrors of the Lord:
Pursued, and driven beyond the Gulf, which frowns
Impassable, between the good and bad,
And downward far remote to left, oppressed
And scorched with the avenging fires, begun
Burning within them,—they upon the verge
Of Erebus, a moment pausing stood,
And saw, below, the unfathomable lake,
Tossing with tides of dark, tempestuous wrath;
And would have looked behind; but greater wrath
Behind, forbade, which now no respite gave
To final misery: God, in the grasp
Of his Almighty strength, took them upraised,
And threw them down, into the yawning pit
Of bottomless perdition, ruined, damned,
Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore;
And Second Death, and the Undying Worm,
Opening their horrid jaws, with hideous yell,
Falling, received their everlasting prey.
A groan returned, as down they sunk, and sunk,
And ever sunk, among the utter dark!
A groan returned! the righteous heard the groan;
The groan of all the reprobate, when first
They felt damnation sure! and heard Hell close!
And heard Jehovah, and his love retire!
A groan returned! the righteous heard the groan:
As if all misery, all sorrow, grief,
All pain, all anguish, all despair, which all
Have suffered, or shall feel, from first to last
Eternity, had gathered to one pang,
And issued in one groan of boundless woe!

And now the wall of hell, the outer wall,
First gateless then, closed round them; that which thou
Hast seen, of fiery adamant, emblazed
With hideous imagery, above all hope,
Above all flight of fancy, burning high;
And guarded evermore by Justice, turned
To Wrath, that hears, unmoved, the endless groan
Of those wasting within; and sees, unmoved,
The endless tear of vain repentance fall.

Nor ask if these shall ever be redeemed.
They never shall: not God, but their own sin
Condemns them: what could be done, as thou hast heard,
Has been already done; all has been tried,
That wisdom infinite, and boundless grace,
Working together, could devise, and all
Has failed; why now succeed? Though God should stoop,
Inviting still, and send his Only Son
To offer grace in hell, the pride that first
Refused, would still refuse; the unbelief,
Still unbelieving, would deride and mock;
Nay more, refuse, deride, and mock; for sin,
Increasing still, and growing day and night
Into the essence of the soul, become
All sin, makes what in time seemed probable,—
Seemed probable, since God invited then—
For ever now impossible. Thus they,
According to the eternal laws which bind
All creatures, bind the Uncreated One,
Though we name not the sentence of the Judge—
Must daily grow in sin and punishment,
Made by themselves their necessary lot,
Unchangeable to all eternity.

What lot! what choice! I sing not, cannot sing.
Here, highest seraphs tremble on the lyre,
And make a sudden pause! but thou hast seen.
And here the bard a moment held his hand,
As one who saw more of that horrid woe
Than words could utter; and again resumed.

Nor yet had vengeance done. The guilty Earth
Inanimate, debased, and stained by sin,
Seat of rebellion, of corruption, long,
And tainted with mortality throughout,
God sentenced next; and sent the final fires
Of ruin forth, to burn and to destroy.
The saints its burning saw; and thou mayst see.
Look yonder, round the lofty golden walls
And galleries of New Jerusalem,
Among the imagery of wonders past;
Look near the southern gate; look, and behold,
On spacious canvass, touched with living hues,—
The Conflagration of the ancient earth,
The handiwork of high archangel, drawn
From memory of what he saw that day.
See how the mountains, how the valleys burn!
The Andes burn, the Alps, the Apennines;
Taurus and Atlas, all the islands burn;
The Ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame.
See how the lightnings, barbed, red with wrath.
Sent from the quiver of Omnipotence,
Cross and recross the fiery gloom, and burn
Into the centre! burn without, within,
And help the native fires, which God awoke,
And kindled with the fury of his wrath.
As inly troubled, now she seems to shake;
The flames, dividing, now a moment fall;
And now in one conglomerated mass,
Rising, they glow on high, prodigious blaze:
Then fall and sink again, as if, within,
The fuel, burnt to ashes, was consumed.
So burned the Earth upon that dreadful day;
Yet not to full annihilation burned:
The essential particles of dust remained,
Purged by the final, sanctifying fires,
From all corruption; from all stain of sin,
Done there by man or devil, purified

Digitized by Google

The essential particles remained, of which
God built the world again, renewed, improved,
With fertile vale, and wood of fertile bough;
And streams of milk and honey, flowing song;
And mountains cinctured with perpetual green;
In clime and season fruitful, as at first,
When Adam woke, unfallen, in Paradise.
And God, from out the fount of native light,
A handful took of beams, and clad the sun
Again in glory; and sent forth the moon
To borrow thence her wonted rays, and lead
Her stars, the virgin daughters of the sky.
And God revived the winds, revived the tides;
And touching her from his Almighty hand,
With force centrifugal, she onward ran,
Coursing her wonted path, to stop no more.
Delightful scene of new inhabitants!
As thou, this morn, in passing hither, sawst.

This done, the glorious Judge, turning to right,
With countenance of love unspeakable,
Beheld the righteous, and approved them thus:
"Ye blessed of my Father, come; ye just,
Enter the joy eternal of your Lord;
Receive your crowns, ascend, and sit with Me,
At God's right hand, in glory evermore."

Thus said the Omnipotent, Incarnate God:
And waited not the homage of the crowns,
Already thrown before him; nor the loud
Amen of universal, holy praise;
But turned the living chariot of fire,
And swifter now—as joyful to declare
This day's proceedings in his Father's court,
And to present the number of his sons
Before the throne—ascended up to heaven.
And all his saints, and all his angel bands,
As, glorious, they on high ascended, sung
Glory to God, and to the Lamb!—they sung
Messiah, fairer than the sons of men,
And altogether lovely. Grace is poured;
Into thy lips, above all measure poured;
And therefore God hath blessed thee evermore.
Gird, gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou
Most Mighty! with thy glory ride; with all
Thy majesty, ride prosperously, because
Of meekness, truth, and righteousness. Thy throne,
O God, for ever and for ever stands:
The sceptre of thy kingdom still is right;
Therefore hath God, thy God, annointed Thee,
With oil of gladness and perfumes of myrrh,
Out of the ivory palaces, above
Thy fellows, crowned the Prince of endless peace.

Thus sung they God, their Saviour; and themselves
Prepared complete to enter now with Christ,
Their living Head, into the Holy Place.
Behold the daughter of the King, the bride,
All glorious within! the bride adorned,
Comely in broidery of gold! behold,
She comes, apparelled royally, in robes
Of perfect righteousness; fair as the sun;
With all her virgins, her companions fair;
Into the Palace of the King she comes!
She comes to dwell for evermore! Awake,
Eternal harps! awake, awake, and sing!
The Lord, the Lord, our God Almighty, reigns!

Thus the Messiah, with the hosts of bliss,
Entered the gates of heaven—unquestioned now—
Which closed behind them, to go out no more,
And stood accepted in his Father's sight;
Before the glorious, everlasting throne,
Presenting all his saints; not one was lost,
Of all that he in Covenant received:
And having given the kingdom up, he sat,
Where now he sits and reigns, on the right hand
Of glory; and our God is all in all.

Thus have I sung beyond thy first request,
Rolling my numbers o'er the track of man,
The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline;
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned,
And God's eternal government approved.

Digitized by Google

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY.

THOMAS KIBBLE HERVEY was born in Paisley, Scotland, Feb. 3, 1799. He studied both at Cambridge and at Oxford, but did not take a degree. After spending a short time in the study of law, he adopted literature as a profession. In 1824 he published "Australia, and other Poems," and in 1829 "The Poetical Sketch-Book," which included the former volume. Meantime he had become a frequent contributor to periodicals and annuals, and in 1830 he published anonymously "The Devil's Progress," a satire. He became an editorial writer for the London *Athenæum*, and from 1846 to 1854 was its sole editor. He published also "The Book of Christmas," and "England's Helicon in the Nineteenth Century," and left an unfinished work entitled "Illustrations of Modern Sculpture." He died at Kentish Town, February 17, 1859, leaving a widow and one son. Mrs. Hervey (Eleanora Louisa Montagu), who also wrote poetry and fairy tales, has edited his poems, with a memoir.

THE CONVICT SHIP.

MORN on the waters! and purple and bright,
Bursts on the billows the flushing of light!
O'er the glad waves, like a child of the sun,
See the tall vessel goes gallantly on;
Full to the breeze she unbosoms her sail,
And her pennant streams onward, like hope in the gale!
The winds come round her, in murmur and song,
And the surges rejoice as they bear her along!
Upward she points to the golden-edged clouds,
And the sailor sings gayly, aloft in the shrouds!
Onward she glides, amid ripple and spray,
Over the waters—away, and away!
Bright as the visions of youth, ere they part,
Passing away, like a dream of the heart!—
Who—as the beautiful pageant sweeps by,
Music around her, and sunshine on high—
Pauses to think amid glitter and glow,
Oh, there be hearts that are breaking below!

Night on the waves!—and the moon is on high,
Hung, like a gem, on the brow of the sky;
Treading its depths, in the power of her might,
And turning the clouds, as they pass her, to light!
Look to the waters!—Asleep on their breast,
Seems not the ship like an island of rest?
Bright and alone on the shadowy main,
Like a heart-cherished home on some desolate plain!
Who—as she smiles in the silvery light,
Spreading her wings on the bosom of night,
Alone on the deep—as the moon in the sky—
A phantom of beauty!—could deem with a sigh,
That so lovely a thing is the mansion of sin,
And souls that are smitten lie bursting within!
Who—as he watches her silently gliding—
Remembers that wave after wave is dividing
Bosoms that sorrow and guilt could not sever,
Hearts that are parted and broken forever!
Or deems that he watches, afloat on the wave,
The death-bed of hope, or the young spirit's grave!

'Tis thus with our life, as it passes along,
Like a vessel at sea, amid sunshine and song!
Gayly we glide, in the gaze of the world,
With streamers afloat, and with canvas unfurled;
All gladness and glory to wandering eyes,
Yet chartered by sorrow, and freighted with sighs!—
Faded and false is the aspect it wears,
As the smiles we put on—just to cover our tears;
And the withering thoughts which the world cannot know,
Like heart-broken exiles lie burning below;
While the vessel drives on to that desolate shore
Where the dreams of our childhood are vanished and o'er!

TO A GIRL WEEPING.

MINE eyes—that may not see thee smile—
Are glad to see thee weep;
Thy spirit's calm, this weary while,
Has been too dark and deep!
Alas, for him who has but tears,
To mark his path of pain!
But oh, *his* long and lonely years,
Who may not weep again!

Thou know'st, young mourner! thou hast been,
Through good and ill, to me,
Amid a bleak and blighted scene,
A single leafy tree:
A star within a stormy sky;
An island on the main;
And I have prayed in agony,
To see thee weep again!

Thou *ever* wert a thing of tears,
When but a playful child,
A very sport of hopes and fears,
And *both* too warm and wild!

Digitized by Google

Thy lightest thoughts and wishes wore
  Too passionate a strain;—
To *such* how often comes an hour
  They never weep again!

Thou wert of those whose very morn
  Gives some dark hint of night,
And in thine eye too soon was born
  A sad and softened light;
And on thy brow youth set a seal
  Which years, upon thy brain,
Confirmed too well—and they who feel
  May scarcely weep again!

Yet, once again, within thine eye,
  I see the waters start—
The fountains cannot *all* be dry
  Within so young a heart!
Our love which clouds have wrapped awhile,
  Thirsts for the spirit's rain,
And I shall yet behold thee *smile*,
  Since thou hast *wept* again!

FLOWER OF MY COLD AND DARKENED YEAR.

Flower of my cold and darkened year!
  Sweet fount amid my spirit's dearth!
Be near me with the smiles that cheer
  The happy home and quiet hearth;
That still 'mid winter and 'mid night,
  Like fairies play their sunny part,
To turn the darkness into light,
  And make it summer in the heart!

What though my early hopes have flown,
  Like Noah's bird that came not back,
And many a faded leaf has strown,
  All—all too soon my summer track;
My heart has treasures of its own,
  Shrines on which ruin cannot fall,
And cherished there, *thy* look and tone
  Are birds and flowers, and hopes and all!

Oh, blessed time of smiles and tears—
  Ere smiles or tears are mournful things—
Of hopes, ere hopes are born with fears—
  And wishes—that have all got wings!
Oh, could I tread again youth's track,
  With thee—belovèd as thou art!
But who shall bring the shadow back,
  Upon the dial of my heart!

Forward, like rivers to the main,
  Time passes on—forever on!—
The moon shall never pause again
  Upon the vale of Ajalon!—
The sun comes o'er the eastern hill,
  On Gideon—as in days gone by,
But that high voice has long been still
  That bade him linger in the sky!

Yet, thou hast been to me a beam,
  Pure as that bright and angel form
That stood beside the troubled stream,
  And gathered healing *from its storm!*
Thy love—when all was strife around—
  Like music sung my soul to rest,
And thou hast fondly sought—and found
  A thousand fountains in my breast!

Oh—for the bloom that thou hast shed,
  Along my wasted breast and brow—
May flowers spring up beneath *thy* tread,
  And make thy life-path bright as now!
Still may thy fancy daily fleet,
  As here 'mid glad and happy themes,
And visions—sweet, as thou art sweet—
  Come gliding to thy nightly dreams!

May mercy shield thy breast and brain,
  (Descending like a gentle dew,)
Alike from grief's and pleasure's pain,
  —For pleasure has her poisons too!—
Bliss—like the spirit's flaming sword—
  Consuming from its very light,
And hopes that—like the prophet's gourd—
  Grow up to perish in a night!

May years pass o'er thee like the breeze
  That sweeps along a spicy vale,
That bows, but will not break, the trees,
  And draws fresh perfume with each gale!
And, when thy wintry day draws in,
  Light—precious as thyself—be given,
To cheer thee through this darker scene,
  And point thee to thy native heaven!

MOUNT CARMEL.

The harp is hushed in Kedron's vale,
  The river dwindled to a rill,
That haunts it—like an ancient tale—
  In dying whispers, still!
The wind, among the sedges, keeps
  Some echoes of its broken lyre,
And wakes, at times, with sudden sweeps,
  Thoughts of its former fire—
Where Carmel's flowery summits rise,
  To point the moral to the skies!

My breast has learned—in *other* lands—
  That moral through its own deep glooms,
Lone as yon lonely city stands
  Among her thousand tombs!
Amid its mouldering wrecks and weeds,
  While memory—like that river—sings,
Or, like the night-breeze in the reeds,
  Plays with its broken strings,
My spirit sits, with folded wing,
  A sad—but not unhappy—thing

What if my loves—like yonder waves,
  That seek a dead and tideless sea—
Have perished in the place of graves,
  That darkly waits for me!
What if no outlet of the *earth*
  Those dull and dreary waters own,
And *time* can give no second birth
  To dreams and wishes gone!
What though my fount of early joy,
  Like Kedron's springs, be almost dry!

High o'er them, with its thousand flowers,
  Its precious crown of scent and bloom,

Digitized by Google

Hope, like another Carmel, towers
  In sunshine and in gloom!
Flinging upon the wasted breast
  Sweets born in climes more pure and high,
And pointing, with its lofty crest,
  Beyond the starry sky—
Where a new Jordan's waves shall gem
  A statelier Jerusalem.

A FAREWELL.

My early love, and must we part?
Yes!—other wishes win thee now,
New hopes are springing in thy heart,
New feelings brightening o'er thy brow!
And childhood's light and childhood's home
Are all forgot at glory's call;—
Yet, cast one thought in years to come,
On her who loved thee—o'er them all!

When pleasure's bowl is filled for thee,
And thou hast raised the cup to sip,
I would not that one dream of me
Should chase the chalice from thy lip;
But should there mingle in the draught
One dream of days that long are o'er,
Then—only then—the pledge be quaffed
To her who ne'er shall taste it more!

When love and friendship's holy joys
Within their magic circle bound thee,
And happy hearts and smiling eyes,
As all *must* wear who are around thee!—
Remember that an eye as bright
Is dimmed, a heart as true is broken,
And turn thee from thy land of light,
To waste on these some little token!

But do not weep!—I could not bear
To stain thy cheek with sorrow's trace,
I would not draw one single tear,
For worlds, down that belovèd face!
As soon would I, if power were given,
Pluck out the bow from yonder sky,
And free the prisoned floods of heaven,
As call one tear-drop to thine eye!

Yet oh, my love! I know not why,
It is a woman's thought!—but while
Thou offerest to my memory,
The tribute should not be—a smile!
For, though I would not see thee weep,
The heart, methinks, should not be gay,
That would the fast of feeling keep
To her who loves it—far away!

No! give me but one single sigh,
Pure as we breathed in happier hours,
When very sighs were winged with joy,
Like gales that have swept over flowers!
That uttering of a fond regret,
That strain *my* spirit long must pour!—
A thousand dreams may wait us yet,
Our holiest and our first is o'er!

THE QUIET LAND.

How sweet to sleep where all is peace,
Where sorrow cannot reach the breast,
Where all life's idle throbbings cease,
And pain is lulled to rest;—
Escaped o'er fortune's troubled wave,
To anchor in the silent grave!

That quiet land where, peril past,
The weary win a long repose,
The bruisèd spirit finds, at last,
A balm for all its woes—
And lowly grief and lordly pride
Lie down, like brothers, side by side!

The breath of slander cannot come
To break the calm that lingers there;
There is no dreaming in the tomb,
Nor waking to despair;
Unkindness cannot wound us more,
And all earth's bitterness is o'er!

There the maiden waits till her lover come—
They nevermore shall part!—
And the stricken deer has gained her home,
With the arrow in her heart!
And passion's pulse lies hushed and still,
Beyond the reach of the tempter's skill!

The mother—she is gone to sleep
With her babe upon her breast—
She has no weary watch to keep
Over her infant's rest;
His slumbers on her bosom fair
Shall never more be broken—*there!*

For me—for me, whom all have left—
The lovely, and the dearly loved!—
From whom the touch of time hath reft
The hearts that time had proved,
Whose guerdon was—and is—despair,
For all I bore—and all I bear—

Why should I linger idly on,
Amid the selfish and the cold,
A dreamer—when such dreams are gone
As those I nursed of old!
Why should the dead tree mock the spring,
A blighted and a withering thing!

How blest—how blest that home to gain,
And slumber in that soothing sleep,
From which we never rise to pain,
Nor ever wake to weep!—
To win my way from the tempest's roar,
And lay me down on the golden shore!

CLEOPATRA.

AFTER DANBY'S PICTURE OF THE EGYPTIAN QUEEN EMBARKING ON THE CYDNUS.

Flutes in the sunny air!
And harps in the porphyry halls!
And a low, deep hum—like a people's prayer—
With its heart-breathed swells and falls!

Digitized by Google

And an echo—like the desert's call—
Flung back to the shouting shores!
And the river's ripple, heard through all,
As it plays with the silver oars—
The sky is a gleam of gold!
And the amber breezes float,
Like thoughts to be dreamed of, but never told,
Around the dancing boat!

She has stepped on the burning sand!
And the thousand tongues are mute!
And the Syrian strikes, with a trembling hand,
The strings of his gilded lute!
And the Æthiop's heart throbs loud and high,
Beneath his white symar,
And the Libyan kneels as he meets her eye,
Like the flash of an eastern star!
The gales may not be heard,
Yet the silken streamers quiver,
And the vessel shoots—like a bright-plumed bird—
Away, down the golden river!

Away by the lofty mount!
And away by the lonely shore!
And away by the gushing of many a fount,
Where fountains gush no more!—
Oh, for some warning vision, there,
Some voice that should have spoken
Of climes to be laid waste and bare,
And glad, young spirits broken!
Of waters dried away,
And hope and beauty blasted!
That scenes so fair and hearts so gay
Should be so early wasted!

A dream of other days!—
That land is a desert, now!
And grief grew up, to dim the blaze
Upon that royal brow!
The whirlwind's burning wind hath cast
Blight on the marble plain,
And sorrow—like the simoom—past
O'er Cleopatra's brain!
Too like her fervid clime, that bred
Its self-consuming fires,
Her breast—like Indian widows—fed
Its own funereal pyres!
Not such the song *her* minstrels sing—
"Live, beauteous, and forever!"
As the vessel darts, with its purple wing,
Away, down the golden river!

SHE SLEEPS THAT STILL AND PLACID SLEEP.

She sleeps that still and placid sleep
For which the weary pant, in vain,
And, where the dews of evening weep,
I may not weep again;—
Oh, nevermore upon her grave
Shall I behold the wild-flower wave!

They laid her where the sun and moon
Look on her tomb with loving eye,
And I have heard the breeze of June
Sweep o'er it—like a sigh!
And the wild river's wailing song
Grow dirge-like, as it stole along!
And I have dreamed in many dreams,
Of her who was a dream to me,
And talked to her by summer streams,
In crowds, and on the sea—
Till, in my soul she grew enshrined,
A young Egeria of the mind!

'Tis years ago!—and other eyes
Have flung their beauty o'er my youth,
And I have hung on other sighs,
And sounds that seemed like truth,
And loved the music which they gave,
Like that which perished in the grave.

And I have left the *cold and dead*,
To mingle with the *living cold*—
There is a weight around my head,
My heart is growing old!—
Oh for a refuge and a home,
With thee, dead Ellen, in thy tomb!

Age sits upon my breast and brain,
My spirit fades before its time,
But they are all thine own again,
Lost partner of their prime!
And thou art dearer in thy shroud,
Than all the false and living crowd!

Rise, gentle vision of the hours,
Which go—like birds, that come not back!
And fling thy pale and funeral flowers
On memory's wasted track!—
Oh, for the wings that made thee blest,
To "flee away and be at rest!"

CLEOPATRA AT ACTIUM.

I.

The banners of the world are met upon that wild blue wave—
The sun has risen that shall set upon an empire's grave;
From tongues of many a land bursts forth the war-shout to the breeze,
And half the crowns of all the earth are played for on the seas!

II.

The ocean hath a tinge of blood—a sound of woe the air:
Death swims his pale steed through the flood—Oh, what doth woman there?
The shout of nations, in their strife, rings far along the lea,
And what doth Egypt's dark-eyed queen upon that battle-sea?

III.

The Cydnus, hath it not the same bright wave and gentle flow
With which it stole to Tarsus, in those happy years ago,
When music haunted all the shores by which its waters rolled,
And she came down the river in her galley of the gold!

Digitized by Google

IV.

Her oars were of the silver, then, and to her purple sails,
And in amid her raven hair, came only perfumed gales;
And Cupids trimmed the silken ropes along the cedar spars,
And she lay, like a goddess, on her pillow of the stars.

V.

Oh, the old city! and, alas! the young and blessed dream
That fell into her spirit first upon its silver stream!
The wild, sweet memories of that morn still o'er her feelings float,
And love has launched this battle-bark, that steered that golden boat.

VI.

And she is yet, to one high heart, through all this cloud of war,
As in that city of the sea, its own and only star—
The cynosure that shines as bright, across that place of graves,
As first it rose upon his soul, from o'er the Cydnus waves.

VII.

Oh, love that is so bold to dare, should be more strong to do,
Or what, oh what doth Egypt there, with that soft silken crew!
And she should have a firmer soul who treads the battle-deck,
And passion, where it fails to save, is, oh, too sure to wreck!

VIII.

And hers is still the spendthrift heart, that, when a wayward girl,
In passion's hour, to pleasure's bowl cast in a priceless pearl;—
But oh, her wealth of hoarded gems were all too poor to pay
The one rich pearl, in this wild hour, her fears have flung away!

IX.

The princely heart to whom her brow, though dark, seemed oh, so fair!
And crowns were only precious things, when in her raven hair;
Who paid her smiles with diadems—and bought, at empire's cost,
The love which he must lose to-day—when all beside is lost.

X.

She hath risen like a queen!—a pause—a moment's pause! and now
One word hath torn the golden badge from off her royal brow!
The prows are turned to Egypt, and the flying sails unfurled,
And the western breeze hath borne from him the fortunes of the world!

EPITAPH.

Farewell!—since nevermore for thee
The sun comes up our earthly skies,
Less bright henceforth shall sunshine be
To some fond heart and saddened eyes.

There are, who for thy last long sleep,
Shall sleep as sweetly nevermore,
Must weep because thou canst not weep,
And grieve that all thy griefs are o'er.

Sad thrift of love!—the loving breast,
Whereon thine aching head was thrown,
Gave up the weary head to rest,
But kept the aching for its own,

Till pain shall find the same low bed
That pillows now thy painless head,
And following darkly through the night,
Love reach thee by the founts of light.

NAY, DRY THAT TEAR!

Nay, dry that tear!—where'er I stray,
My spirit never shall repine,
While it has power to chase away
The shadows, dear! from thine.

My soul has weathered storms, above
The strength of feeble minds to bear;
But may not see the cheek I love
Dimmed by affliction's tear.

'Tis bliss enough for me to rest
Beneath the ray of that blue eye—
Or, pillowed on thy gentle breast,
To echo back its sigh!

But oh! that eye must not be wet
With aught that speaks the touch of sorrow—
Nor must the mummur of regret
Thy sigh's soft music borrow!

Oh, may thy looks be ever bright,
With that sweet smile which peace discloses,
And o'er the young cheek sheds its light,
Like sunbeams upon roses!

And may thy sighs, if sighs e'er start,
Light as the wings to seraphs given,
Come from the heaven of thy heart,
To waft the heart to heaven!

Digitized by Google

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, October 25, 1800. His father was a West India merchant, of Scotch descent. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of eighteen, and was soon known as one of the most brilliant students there. Even at that time his reading had been so wide, and his memory was so tenacious, that he was dubbed "omniscient Macaulay." He took the chancellor's medal twice, in 1819 and 1820, for poems entitled "Pompeii" and "Evening." He graduated in 1822, and during the next four years resided alternately at London and Cambridge. At this time he wrote his poems "Moncontour" and "Ivry," and contributed essays to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*. For twenty years he was a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, in which many of his well-known essays appeared.

Macaulay was admitted to the bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1826, but he never practised. He was appointed Commissioner of Bankrupts soon after, and in 1830 entered Parliament for a pocket borough. Two years later he was elected for Leeds. In the House of Commons he made numerous carefully-prepared speeches, advocating the most liberal measures and adding considerable strength to the Whig party. He was appointed Secretary of the Board of Control in 1833, but in 1834 resigned that office and his seat in Parliament, being appointed a member of the Supreme Council of India. There he constructed a new code, which was designed to give equal justice to the natives and the English residents; but it met with determined opposition from the latter, and was not allowed to succeed. He returned to England in 1838, and in 1839 was elected to Parliament for Edinburgh and was appointed Secretary of War in the Melbourne ministry. After that ministry was dissolved in 1841, he sided with the opposition. When the Whigs returned to power in 1846, he was made Paymaster-General; but he failed to be reëlected for Edinburgh in 1847. In 1857 he was raised to the peerage with the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley.

The first collection of Macaulay's essays was published in Boston, Mass., in 1840. In 1842 he published "Lays of Ancient Rome," which met with immediate and universal appreciation. They are all included in the selections here given. Macaulay introduced each of them with a learned preface which we have not thought it necessary to reprint. "The History of England" was published in 1848–'55. Macaulay died suddenly at Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, Kensington, December 28, 1859, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

HORATIUS.

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX.

LARS PORSENA of Clusium
  By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
  Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
  And named a trysting-day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
  To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
  The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
  Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
  Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
  Is on the march for Rome.

The horsemen and the footmen
  Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place,
  From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
  Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest hangs on the crest
  Of purple Apennine;

From lordly Volaterræ,
  Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants,
  For god-like kings of old;
From sea-girt Populonia,
  Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
  Fringing the southern sky;

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
  Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
  Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
  Through corn and vines and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
  Her diadem of towers.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
  Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
  Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
  Is to the herdsman dear;

Digitized by Google

Best of all pools the fowler loves
  The great Volsinian mere.

But now no stroke of woodman
  Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
  Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
  Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the water-fowl may dip
  In the Volsinian mere.

The harvests of Arretium
  This year old men shall reap;
This year young boys in Umbro
  Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
  This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
  Whose sires have marched to Rome.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
  The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
  Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
  Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
  By mighty seers of yore.

And with one voice the Thirty
  Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena,
  Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
  To Clusium's royal dome,
And hang round Nurscia's altars
  The golden shields of Rome."

And now hath every city
  Sent up her tale of men:
The foot are fourscore thousand,
  The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium
  Is met the great array,
A proud man was Lars Porsena
  Upon the trysting-day.

For all the Etruscan armies
  Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
  And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
  To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name.

But by the yellow Tiber
  Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
  To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
  The throng stopped up the ways:
A fearful sight it was to see
  Through two long nights and days.

For aged folk on crutches,
  And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
  That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
  High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
  With reaping-hooks and staves,

And droves of mules and asses
  Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
  And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
  That creaked beneath their weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
  Choked every roaring gate.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
  Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
  Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
  They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
  With tidings of dismay.

To eastward and to westward
  Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecote,
  In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
  Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
  And the stout guards are slain.

I wis, in all the Senate,
  There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
  When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
  Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
  And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
  Before the River-gate:
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
  For musing or debate.
Out spoke the Consul roundly:
  "The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
  Naught else can save the town."

Just then a scout came flying,
  All wild with haste and fear:
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul;
  Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
  The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
  Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
  Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
  From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
  The trampling and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
  Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
  In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
  The long array of spears.

Digitized by Google

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield;
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sate in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spate towards him and hissed;
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge
What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now, who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius,
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand on thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius,
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold;
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

Now, while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe;
And Fathers mixed with Commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly toward the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that mighty mass;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow pass;

Digitized by Google

Aunus from green Tifernum,
  Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
  Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
  Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
  O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
  Into the stream beneath;
Herminius struck at Seius,
  And clove him to the teeth;
At Picus brave Horatius
  Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
  Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
  Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
  The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
  Who slew the great wild-boar,
The great wild-boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields and slaughtered men
  Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns;
  Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
  Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
  No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
  Thy thrice accursed sail!"

But now no sound of laughter
  Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
  From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' length from the entrance
  Halted that mighty mass,
And for a space no man came forth
  To win the narrow pass.

But hark! the cry is Astur:
  And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
  Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
  Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
  Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
  A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
  And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
  Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
  If Astur clears the way?"

Then whirling up his broadsword
  With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
  And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
  Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
  To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
  He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
  Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
  So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
  Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
  Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
  A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
  The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
  Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
  Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
  Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
  Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
  To taste our Roman cheer?"

But at his haughty challenge
  A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
  Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
  Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
  Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
  Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
  In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
  Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
  Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
  To lead such dire attack;
But those behind cried "Forward!"
  And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

Digitized by Google

Yet one man for one moment
  Strode out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
  And they gave him greeting loud.
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
  Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay and turn away?
  Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he on the city;
  Thrice looked he on the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
  And thrice turned back in dread:
And, white with fear and hatred,
  Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
  The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever
  Have manfully been plied,
And now the bridge hangs tottering
  Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
  Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
  Back, ere the ruin fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
  Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
  They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces
  And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
  They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
  Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
  Lay right athwart the stream:
And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow foam.

And like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane;
And burst the curb, and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free;
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
  "Now yield thee to our grace."

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;

And he spake to the noble river
  That rolls by the towers of Rome:

"O Tiber! father Tiber!
  To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
  Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed,
  The good sword by his side,
And, with his harness on his back,
  Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
  Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
  Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
  They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
  Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
  Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
  And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor,
  And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
  But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
  In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
  Safe to the landing-place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely
  By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
  Bare bravely up his chin.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus,
  "Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
  We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
  "And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
  Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;
  Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
  To press his gory hands;
And now with shouts and clapping,
  And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-gate,
  Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land,
  That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
  Could plough from morn till night,
And they made a molten image,
  And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
  To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,
  Plain for all folk to see;

Digitized by Google

Horatius in his harness,
  Halting upon one knee;
And underneath is written,
  In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
  Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
  To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
  For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
  In the brave days of old.

And in the nights of winter,
  When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
  Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
  Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
  Roar louder yet within;

When the oldest cask is opened,
  And the largest lamp is lit,
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
  And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
  Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
  And the lads are shaping bows;

When the goodman mends his armor,
  And trims his helmets plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
  Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
  Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND POLLUX ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLI.

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
  Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride, in all their pride,
  Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows
  Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum,
  To Mars without the wall.
Each Knight is robed in purple,
  With olive each is crowned;
A gallant war-horse under each
  Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
  While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
  Shall have such honor still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
  December's Nones are gay:
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
  Shall be Rome's whitest day.

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
  We keep this solemn feast.
Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
  Came spurring from the east.
They came o'er wild Parthenius
  Tossing in waves of pine,
O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
  O'er purple Apennine,
From where with flutes and dances
  Their ancient mansion rings,
In lordly Lacedæmon,
  The City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus,
  Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum,
  Was fought the glorious fight.

Now on the place of slaughter
  Are cots and sheepfolds seen,
And rows of vines, and fields of wheat
  And apple-orchards green.
The swine crush the big acorns
  That fall from Corne's oaks:
Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
  The reaper's pottage smokes.
The fisher baits his angle;
  The hunter twangs his bow:
Little they think on those strong limbs
  That moulder deep below.
Little they think how sternly
  That day the trumpets pealed;
How in the slippery swamp of blood
  Warrior and war-horse reeled;
How wolves came with fierce gallop,
  And crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
  And peck the eyes of kings;
How thick the dead lay scattered
  Under the Porcian height;
How through the gates of Tusculum
  Raved the wild stream of flight;
And how the Lake Regillus
  Bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities
  Came forth to war with Rome.

But, Roman, when thou standest
  Upon that holy ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock
  That girds the dark lake round.
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
  Stamped deep into the flint:
It was no hoof of mortal steed
  That made so strange a dint:
There to the Great Twin Brethren
  Vow thou thy vows, and pray
That they, in tempest and in fight,
  Will keep thy head alway.

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
  Of mortal eyes were seen,
Have years gone by a hundred
  And fourscore and thirteen.
That summer a Virginius
  Was Consul first in place;
The second was stout Aulus,
  Of the Posthumian race.

Digitized by Google

The Herald of the Latines
  From Gabii came in state:
The Herald of the Latines
  Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate:
The Herald of the Latines
  Did in our Forum stand;
And there he did his office,
  A sceptre in his hand.

"Hear, Senators and people
  Of the good town of Rome:
The Thirty Cities charge you
  To bring the Tarquins home:
And if ye still be stubborn,
  To work the Tarquins wrong,
The Thirty Cities warn you,
  Look that your walls be strong."

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
  He spake a bitter jest:
"Once the jays sent a message
  Unto the eagle's nest:
Now yield thou up thine eyrie
  Unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face
  The jays in deadly fight.
Forth looked in wrath the eagle:
  And carrion-kite and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
  Fled screaming far away."

The Herald of the Latines
  Hath hied him back in state;
The Fathers of the City
  Are met in high debate.
Then spake the elder Consul,
  An ancient man and wise:
"Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
  To that which I advise.
In seasons of great peril
  'Tis good that one bear sway;
Then choose we a Dictator,
  Whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply
  The sword of Aulus bites;
And all our city calls him
  The man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator
  For six months and no more,
And have a Master of the Knights,
  And axes twenty-four."

So Aulus was Dictator,
  The man of seventy fights;
He made Æbutius Elva
  His Master of the Knights.
On the third morn thereafter,
  At dawning of the day,
Did Aulus and Æbutius
  Set forth with their array.
Sempronius Atratinus
  Was left in charge at home
With boys and with gray-headed men,
  To keep the walls of Rome.
Hard by the Lake Regillus
  Our camp was pitched at night;
Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
  Under the Porcian height.
Far over hill and valley
  Their mighty host was spread;
And with their thousand watch-fires
  The midnight sky was red.

Up rose the golden morning
  Over the Porcian height,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
  Marked evermore with white.
Not without secret trouble
  Our bravest saw the foes,
For, girt by threescore thousand spears,
  The thirty standards rose.
From every warlike city
  That boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
  That gallant army came;
From Setia's purple vineyards,
  From Norba's ancient wall,
From the white streets of Tusculum,
  The proudest town of all;
From where the Witch's Fortress
  O'erhangs the dark-blue seas,
From the still glassy lake that sleeps
  Beneath Aricia's trees—
Those trees in whose dim shadow
  The ghastly priest doth reign,
The priest who slew the slayer,
  And shall himself be slain;
From the drear banks of Ufens,
  Where flights of marsh-fowl play,
And buffaloes lie wallowing
  Through the hot summer's day;
From the gigantic watch-towers,
  No work of earthly men,
Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
  The never-ending fen;
From the Laurentian jungle,
  The wild-hog's reedy home,
From the green steps whence Anio leaps
  In floods of snow-white foam.

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
  Velitræ, with the might
Of Setia and of Tusculum,
  Were marshalled on their right:
Their leader was Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name;
Upon his head a helmet
  Of red gold shone like flame;
High on a gallant charger
  Of dark-gray hue he rode
Over his gilded armor
  A vest of purple flowed,
Woven in the land of sunrise
  By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
And by the sails of Carthage brought
  Far o'er the southern waters.

Lavinium and Circeium
  Had on the left their post,
With all the banners of the marsh,
  And banners of the coast.
Their leader was false Sextus,
  That wrought the deed of shame:
With restless pace and haggard face,
  To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions,
  Which none beside might see;
And that strange sounds were in his ears,
  Which none might hear but he.

Digitized by Google

A woman fair and stately,
But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
Sate spinning by his bed.
And as she plied the distaff,
In a sweet voice and low,
She sang of great old houses,
And fights fought long ago.
So spun she, and so sung she,
Until the east was gray;
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
And shrieked, and fled away.

But in the centre thickest
Were ranged the shields of foes,
And from the centre loudest
The cry of battle rose.
There Tibur marched and Pedum
Beneath proud Tarquin's rule,
And Ferentinium of the rock,
And Gabii of the pool.
There rode the Volscian succors;
There, in a dark, stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close
Around the ancient king.
Though white as Mount Soracte,
When winter nights are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt,
His heart and hand were strong;
Under his hoary eyebrows
Still flashed forth quenchless rage
And if the lance shook in his gripe,
'Twas more with hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus
On an Apulian steed,
Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
Too good for such a breed.

Now on each side the leaders
Gave signal for the charge;
And on each side the footmen
Strode on with lance and targe;
And on each side the horsemen
Struck their spurs deep in gore,
And front to front the armies
Met with a mighty roar:
And under that great battle
The earth with blood was red;
And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
The dust hung overhead;
And louder still and louder
Rose from the darkened field
The braying of the war-horns,
The clang of sword and shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping
Like whirlwinds o'er the plain,
The shouting of the slayers,
And screeching of the slain.

False Sextus rode out foremost:
His look was high and bold;
His corset was of bison's hide,
Plated with steel and gold.
As glares the famished eagle
From the Digentian rock,
On a choice lamb that bounds alone
Before Bandusia's flock,
Herminius glared on Sextus,
And came with eagle speed;
Herminius on black Auster,
Brave champion on brave steed;
In his right hand the broadsword
That kept the bridge so well,
And on his helm the crown he won
When proud Fidenæ fell.
Woe to the maid whose lover
Shall cross his path to-day!
False Sextus saw, and trembled,
And turned, and fled away.
As turns, as flies, the woodman
In the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the round eye
Of that fell painted snake,
So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
And hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
Bristling with crest and spear.

Then far to North Æbutius,
The Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba
To feed the Portian kites.
Next under those red horse-hoofs
Flaccus of Setia lay;
Better had he been pruning
Among his elms that day.
Mamilius saw the slaughter,
And tossed his golden crest,
And toward the Master of the Knights
Through the thick battle pressed.
Æbutius smote Mamilius
So fiercely on the shield,
That the great Lord of Tusculum
Wellnigh rolled on the field.
Mamilius smote Æbutius,
With a good aim and true,
Just where the neck and shoulder join,
And pierced him through and through;
And brave Æbutius Elva
Fell swooning to the ground:
But a thick wall of bucklers
Encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space;
And filled a helm from the dark lake,
And bathed his brow and face;
And when at last he opened
His swimming eyes to light,
Men say, the earliest word he spake
Was, "Friends, how goes the fight?"

But meanwhile in the centre
Great deeds of arms were wrought;
There Aulus the Dictator,
And there Valerius fought.
Aulus, with his good broadsword,
A bloody passage cleared
To where, amidst the thickest foes,
He saw the long white beard.
Flat lighted that good broadsword
Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance: he dropped the reins;
He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him,
With eyes like coals of fire;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
Fast down to earth they spring;

Digitized by Google

And hand to hand they fight on foot
  Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Cæso
  A death-wound in the face;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man
  Of the brave Fabian race:
Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
  The priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius,
  Of Rome's great Julian line;
Julius, who left his mansion
  High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and woe
  Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin
  A corps was Julius laid:
And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
  And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
  And lopped off half his crest;
But Titus stabbed Valerius
  A span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
  Valerius reeled and fell.
Ah! woe is me for the good house
  That loves the people well!
Then shouted loud the Latines;
  And with one rush they bore
The struggling Romans backward
  Three lances' length or more;
And up they took proud Tarquin,
  And laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him,
  Still senseless, from the field.

But fiercer grew the fighting
  Around Valerius dead;
For Titus dragged him by the foot,
  And Aulus by the head.
"On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus,
  "See how the rebels fly!"
"Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus,
  "And win this fight or die!
They must not give Valerius
  To raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
  And aye upheld the right:
And for your wives and babies
  In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
  That loves the people well!"

Then tenfold round the body
  The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest,
  When a strong north-wind blows.
Now backward, and now forward,
  Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
  And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
  Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
  That writhed and gnawed the ground;
And wounded horses kicking,
  And snorting purple foam:
Right well did such a couch befit
  A Consular of Rome.

But north looked the Dictator;
  North looked he long and hard;
And spake to Caius Cossus,
  The Captain of his Guard:
"Caius, of all the Romans
  Thou hast the keenest sight;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust
  Comes from the Latian right!"

Then answered Caius Cossus:
  "I see an evil sight;
The banner of proud Tusculum
  Comes from the Latian right,
I see the plumèd horsemen;
  And far before the rest
I see the dark-gray charger,
  I see the purple vest;
I see the golden helmet
  That shines far off like flame;
So ever rides Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name."

"Now, hearken, Caius Cossus;
  Spring on thy horse's back;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine
  Were all upon thy track!
Haste to our southward battle,
  And never draw thy rein
Until thou find Herminius,
  And bid him come amain."

So Aulus spake, and turned him
  Again to that fierce strife;
And Caius Cossus mounted,
  And rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
  The helmets of the dead,
And many a curdling pool of blood
  Splashed him from heel to head.
So came he far to southward,
  Where fought the Roman host
Against the banners of the marsh,
  And banners of the coast.
Like corn before the sickle
  The stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword
  That kept the bridge so well.

"Herminius! Aulus greets thee;
  He bids thee come with speed
To help our central battle,
  For sore is there our need:
There wars the youngest Tarquin,
  And there the Crest of Flame,
The Tusculan Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name.
Valerius hath fallen fighting
  In front of our array,
And Aulus of the seventy fields
  Alone upholds the day."

Herminius beat his bosom,
  But never a word he spake:
He clapped his hands on Auster's mane;
  He gave the reins a shake.
Away, away went Auster
  Like an arrow from the bow;
Black Auster was the fleetest steed
  From Aufidus to Po.

Digitized by Google

Right glad were all the Romans
  Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
  Around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering
  Rose with a mighty swell,
"Herminius comes, Herminius,
  Who kept the bridge so well!"

Mamilius spied Herminius,
  And dashed across the way.
"Herminius! I have sought thee
  Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
  Shall never more go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum,
  And lay thou on for Rome!"

All round them paused the battle,
  While met in mortal fray
The Roman and the Tusculan,
  The horses black and gray.
Herminius smote Mamilius
  Through breastplate and through breast,
And fast flowed out the purple blood
  Over the purple vest.
Mamilius smote Herminius
  Through headpiece and through head,
And side by side those chiefs of pride
  Together fell down dead.
Down fell they dead together
  In a great lake of gore;
And still stood all who saw them fall
  While men might count a score.

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning,
  The dark-gray charger fled;
He burst through ranks of fighting men,
  He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
His bridle far out-streaming,
  His flanks all blood and foam,
He sought the southern mountains,
  The mountains of his home.
The pass was steep and rugged,
  The wolves they howled and whined;
But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
  And he left the wolves behind.
Through many a startled hamlet
  Thundered his flying feet:
He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
  He rushed up the long white street;
He rushed by tower and temple,
  And paused not from the race
Till he stood before his master's door
  In the stately market-place.
And straightway round him gathered
  A pale and trembling crowd,
And when they knew him cries of rage
  Brake forth, and wailing loud:
And women rent their tresses
  For their great prince's fall;
And old men girt on their old swords,
  And went to man the wall.

But, like a graven image,
  Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
  Into his master's face.
The raven-mane that daily,
  With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed,
  And twined in even tresses,
And decked with colored ribbons
  From her own gay attire,
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
  In carnage and in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
  And seized black Auster's rein;
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath,
  And ran at him amain.
"The furies of thy brother
  With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursèd house
  Upon black Auster ride!"
As on an Alpine watch-tower
  From heaven comes down the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
  The blade of Aulus came:
And out the red blood spouted,
  In a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court
  Of some rich Capuan's hall.
The knees of all the Latines
  Were loosened with dismay
When dead, on dead Herminius,
  The bravest Tarquin lay.

And Aulus the Dictator
  Stroked Auster's raven-mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths,
  With heed unto the rein.
"Now bear me well, black Auster,
  Into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge
  For thy good lord this day."

So spake he; and was buckling
  Tighter black Auster's band,
When he was aware of a princely pair
  That rode at his right hand.
So like they were, no mortal
  Might one from other know:
White as snow their armor was,
  Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
  Did such rare armor gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds
  Drink of an earthly stream.

And all who saw them trembled,
  And pale grew every cheek;
And Aulus the Dictator
  Scarce gathered voice to speak:
"Say by what name men call you?
  What city is your home?
And wherefore ride ye in such guise
  Before the ranks of Rome?"

"By many names men call us:
  In many lands we dwell:
Well Samothracia knows us:
  Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum
  Is hung each morn with flowers:
High o'er the masts of Syracuse
  Our marble portal towers:
But by the proud Eurotas
  Is our dear native home;
And for the right we come to fight
  Before the ranks of Rome."

Digitized by Google

So answered those strange horsemen,
And each couched low his spear;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome
Were bold, and of good cheer;
And on the thirty armies
Came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left,
And Cora on the right.
"Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus;
"The foe begins to yield!
Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
Charge for the Golden Shield!
Let no man stop to plunder,
But slay, and slay, and slay;
The gods who live forever
Are on our side to-day."

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish
From earth to heaven arose,
The kites knew well the long stern swell
That bids the Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus
Was lifted up to slay;
Then, like a crag down Apennine,
Rushed Auster through the fray.
But under those strange horsemen
Still thicker lay the slain;
And after those strange horses
Black Auster toiled in vain.
Behind them Rome's long battle
Came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above,
Blades all in line below.
So comes the Po in flood-time
Upon the Celtic plain:
So comes the squall, blacker than night,
Upon the Adrian main.
Now, by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tide of flight.
So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow;
So corn-sheaves in the flood-time
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head:
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Circeium fled.
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray;
The footmen of Velitræ
Threw shield and spear away.
And under foot was trampled,
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before:
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks
From where the apple-blossoms wave
On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
Chief of the Volscian aids,
And Metius with the long fair curls,
The love of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
The hunter of the deer;
And in the back false Sextus
Felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died,
Like a worm beneath the wheel:
And fliers and pursuers
Were mingled in a mass;
And far away the battle
Went roaring through the pass.

Sempronius Atratinus
Sate in the Eastern Gate.
Beside him were three Fathers,
Each in his chair of state:
Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons
That day were in the field;
And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve
Who keep the Golden Shield;
And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
For wisdom far renowned;
In all Etruria's colleges
Was no such Pontiff found.
And all around the portal,
And high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people,
But sad and silent all;
Young lads, and stooping elders
That might not bear the mail,
Matrons with lips that quivered,
And maids with faces pale.
Since the first gleam of daylight,
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east.
The mist of eve was rising,
The sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair
Fast pricking toward the town.
So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armor was,
Their steeds were red with gore.

"Hail to the great Asylum!
Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
And the shield that fell from heaven!
This day, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum
Was fought a glorious fight.
To-morrow your Dictator
Shall bring in triumph home
The spoils of thirty cities
To deck the shrines of Rome!".

Then burst from that great concourse
A shout that shook the towers,
And some ran north, and some ran south,
Crying, "The day is ours!"
But on rode these strange horsemen,
With slow and lordly pace;
And none who saw their bearing
Durst ask their name or race.
On rode they to the Forum,
While laurel-boughs and flowers,
From housetops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers.
When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,

Digitized by Google

And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

And all the people trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Sergius the High Pontiff
Alone found voice to speak:
"The gods who live forever
Have fought for Rome to-day!
These be the Great Twin Brethren
To whom the Dorians pray.
Back comes the Chief in triumph,
Who in the hour of fight
Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
In harness on his right.
Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses
In Vesta's holy well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door,
I know, but may not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's temple,
Build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome.
And when the months returning
Bring back this day of fight,
The proud Ides of Quintillis,
Marked evermore with white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings,
With music and with song;
And let the doors and windows
Be hung with garlands all,
And let the Knights be summoned
To Mars without the wall;
Thence let them ride in purple
With joyous trumpet-sound,
Each mounted on his war-horse,
And each with olive crowned;
And pass in solemn order
Before the sacred dome,
Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome."

VIRGINIA.

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE FORUM ON THE DAY WHEREON LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERANUS AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS STOLO WERE ELECTED TRIBUNES OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLXXXII.

Ye good men of the Commons, with loving hearts and true,
Who stand by the bold Tribunes that still have stood by you,
Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne; of what Rome yet may bear.
This is no Grecian fable, of fountains running wine,
Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors turned to swine.
Here, in this very Forum, under the noonday sun,
In sight of all the people, the bloody deed was done.
Old men still creep among us who saw that fearful day,
Just seventy years and seven ago, when the wicked Ten bare sway.

Of all the wicked Ten still the names are held accursed,
And of all the wicked Ten, Appius Claudius was the worst.
He stalked along the Forum like King Tarquin in his pride:
Twelve axes waited on him, six marching on a side;
The townsmen shrank to right and left, and eyed askance with fear
His lowering brow, his curling mouth which alway seemed to sneer:
That brow of hate, that mouth of scorn, marks all the kindred still;
For never was there Claudius yet but wished the Commons ill:
Nor lacks he fit attendance; for close behind his heels,
With outstretched chin and crouching pace the client Marcus steals,
His loins girt up to run with speed, be the errand what it may,
And the smile flickering on his cheek, for aught his lord may say.
Such varlets pimp and jest for hire among the lying Greeks;
Such varlets still are paid to hoot when brave Licinius speaks.
Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd;
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;
Where'er down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye see;
And wheresoe'er such lord is found, such client still will be.

Just then, as through one cloudless chink in a black stormy sky
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a fair young girl came by.
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Home she went bounding from school, nor dreamed of shame nor harm.
And past those dreaded axes she innocently ran,
With bright, frank brow that had not learned to blush at gaze of man;
And up the Sacred Street she turned, and, as she danced along,
She warbled gayly to herself lines of the good old song,
How for a sport the princes came spurring from the camp,
And found Lucrece, combing the fleece, under the midnight lamp.

Digitized by Google

The maiden sang as sings the lark, when up he darts his flight,
From his nest in the green April corn, to meet the morning light;
And Appius heard her sweet young voice, and saw her sweet young face;
And loved her with the accursed love of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum, and up the Sacred Street,
His vulture eye pursued the trip of those small glancing feet.

* * * * * *

Over the Alban mountains the light of morning broke;
From all the roofs of the Seven Hills curled the thin wreaths of smoke;
The city gates were opened; the Forum, all alive,
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive.
Blithely on brass and timber the craftsman's stroke was ringing,
And blithely o'er her panniers the market-girl was singing,
And blithely young Virginia came smiling from her home:
Ah! woe for young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome!
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm.
She crossed the Forum shining with stalls in alleys gay,
And just had reached the very spot whereon I stand this day,
When up the varlet Marcus came; not such as when erewhile
He crouched behind his patron's heels with the true client smile:
He came with lowering forehead, swollen features, and clinched fist,
And strode across Virginia's path, and caught her by the wrist.
Hard strove the frighted maiden, and screamed with look aghast;
And at her scream from right and left the folk came running fast;
The money-changer Crispus, with his thin silver hairs,
And Hanno from the stately booth glittering with Punic wares,
And the strong smith Muræna, grasping a half-forged brand,
And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in his hand.
All came in wrath and wonder; for all knew that fair child;
And, as she passed them twice a day, all kissed their hands and smiled;
And the strong smith Muræna gave Marcus such a blow,
The caitiff reeled three paces back, and let the maiden go.
Yet glared he fiercely round him, and growled in harsh, fell tone,
"She's mine, and I will have her. I seek but for mine own:
She is my slave, born in my house, and stolen away and sold,
The year of the sore sickness, ere she was twelve hours old,
'Twas in the sad September, the month of wail and fright,
Two augurs were borne forth that morn; the Consul died ere night.
I wait on Appius Claudius; I waited on his sire:
Let him who works the client wrong, beware the patron's ire!"

So spake the varlet Marcus; and dread and silence came
On all the people at the sound of the great Claudian name,
For then there was no Tribune to speak the word of might,
Which makes the rich man tremble, and guards the poor man's right;
There was no brave Licinius, no honest Sextius then;
But all the city, in great fear, obeyed the wicked Ten.
Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muræna's skirt, and sobbed, and shrieked for aid,
Forth through the throng of gazers the young Icilius pressed,
And stamped his foot, and rent his gown, and smote upon his breast,
And sprang upon that column, by many a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets, three rusting swords are hung,
And beckoned to the people, and in bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning words which tyrants quake to hear.

"Now, by your children's cradles, now, by your fathers' graves,
Be men to-day, Quirites, or be forever slaves!
For this did Servius give us laws? For this did Lucrece bleed?
For this was the great vengeance done on Tarquin's evil seed?
For this did those false sons make red the axes of their sire?
For this did Scævola's right hand hiss in the Tuscan fire?
Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race that stormed the lion's den?
Shall we, who could not brook one lord, crouch to the wicked Ten?
Oh for that ancient spirit, which curbed the Senate's will!
Oh for the tents which in old time whitened the Sacred Hill!
In those brave days our fathers stood firmly side by side;
They faced the Marcian fury; they tamed the Fabian pride:
They drove the fiercest Quinctius an outcast forth from Rome;
They sent the haughtiest Claudius with shivered fasces home.

Digitized by Google

But what their care bequeathed us our madness flung away:
All the ripe fruit of threescore years was blighted in a day.
Exult, ye proud Patricians! The hard-fought fight is o'er.
We strove for honor—'twas in vain: for freedom—'tis no more.
No crier to the polling summons the eager throng;
No Tribune breathes the word of might that guards the weak from wrong;
Our very hearts, that were so high, sink down beneath your will.
Riches, and lands, and power, and state—ye have them: keep them still.
Still keep the holy fillets; still keep the purple gown,
The axes, and the curule chair, the car, and laurel crown:
Still press us for your cohorts, and when the fight is done,
Still fill your garners from the soil which our good swords have won.
Still, like a spreading ulcer, which leech-craft may not cure,
Let your foul usance eat away the substance of the poor;
Still let your haggard debtors bear all their fathers bore;
Still let your dens of torment be noisome as of yore;
No fire when Tiber freezes; no air in dog-star heat;
And store of rods for freeborn backs, and holes for freeborn feet.
Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate;
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.
But, by the Shades beneath us, and by the Gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love!
Have ye not graceful ladies, whose spotless lineage springs
From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and ancient Alban kings?
Ladies, who deign not on our paths to set their tender feet,
Who from their cars look down with scorn upon the wondering street;
Who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold,
And breathe of Capuan odors, and shine with Spanish gold?
Then leave the poor Plebeian his single tie to life—
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister, and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm of all that his vexed soul endures,
The kiss, in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.
Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with pride;
Still let the bridegroom's arms enfold an unpolluted bride;
Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's blood to flame.
Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare."

* * * * * *

Straightway Virginius led the maid a little space aside,
To where the reeking shambles stood, piled up with horn and hide,
Close to yon low dark archway, where, in a crimson flood,
Leaps down to the great sewer the gurgling stream of blood.
Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid his whittle down:
Virginius caught the whittle up, and hid it in his gown.
And then his eyes grew very dim, and his throat began to swell,
And in a hoarse, changed voice he spake, "Farewell, sweet child! Farewell;
Oh! how I loved my darling! Though stern I sometimes be,
To thee, thou knowest, I was not so. Who could be so to thee?
And how my darling loved me! How glad she was to hear
My footsteps on the threshold when I came back last year!
And how she danced with pleasure to see my civic crown,
And took my sword, and hung it up, and brought me forth my gown!
Now, all these things are over—yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays;
And none will grieve when I go forth, or smile when I return,
Or watch beside the old man's bed, or weep upon his urn.
The house that was the happiest within the Roman walls,
The house that envied not the wealth of Capua's marble halls,
Now, for the brightness of thy smile, must have eternal gloom,
And for the music of thy voice, the silence of the tomb.
The time is come. See how he points his eager hand this way!
See how his eyes gloat on thy grief, like a kite's upon the prey!
With all his wit, he little deems that, spurned, betrayed, bereft,
Thy father hath in his despair one fearful refuge left.
He little deems that in this hand I clutch what still can save
Thy gentle youth from taunts and blows, the portion of the slave;
Yea, and from nameless evil, that passeth taunt and blow—
Foul outrage which thou knowest not, which thou shalt never know.
Then clasp me round the neck once more, and give me one more kiss;
And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but this."

Digitized by Google

With that he lifted high the steel, and smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth, and with one sob she died.

Then, for a little moment, all people held their breath;
And through the crowded Forum was stillness as of death;
And in another moment brake forth from one and all
A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall.
Some with averted faces shrieking fled home amain;
Some ran to call a leech; and some ran to lift the slain:
Some felt her lips and little wrist, if life might there be found;
And some tore up their garments fast, and strove to stanch the wound.
In vain they ran, and felt, and stanched; for never truer blow
That good right arm had dealt in fight against a Volscian foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that deed, he shuddered and sank down,
And hid his face some little space with the corner of his gown,
Till, with white lips and bloodshot eyes, Virginius tottered nigh,
And stood before the judgment-seat, and held the knife on high.
"Oh! dwellers in the nether gloom, avengers of the slain,
By this dear blood I cry to you, do right between us twain;
And even as Appius Claudius hath dealt by me and mine,
Deal you by Appius Claudius and all the Claudian line!"
So spake the slayer of his child, and turned, and went his way;
But first he cast one haggard glance to where the body lay,
And writhed, and groaned a fearful groan; and then, with steadfast feet,
Strode right across the market-place unto the Sacred Street.

Then up sprang Appius Claudius: "Stop him; alive or dead!
Ten thousand pounds of copper to the man who brings his head."
He looked upon his clients, but none would work his will.
He looked upon his lictors, but they trembled and stood still.
And, as Virginius through the press his way in silence cleft,
Ever the mighty multitude fell back to right and left.
And he hath passed in safety unto his woful home,
And there ta'en horse to tell the camp what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen from every side,
And streets and porches round were filled with that o'erflowing tide;
And close around the body gathered a little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain.
They brought a bier, and hung it with many a cypress crown,
And gently they uplifted her, and gently laid her down.
The face of Appius Claudius wore the Claudian scowl and sneer,
And in the Claudian note he cried, "What doth this rabble here?
Have they no crafts to mind at home, that hitherward they stray?
Ho! lictors, clear the market-place, and fetch the corpse away!"
Till then the voice of pity and fury was not loud,
But a deep sullen murmur wandered among the crowd,
Like the moaning noise that goes before the whirlwind on the deep,
Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but half-aroused from sleep.
But when the lictors at that word, tall yoemen all and strong,
Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs, went down into the throng,
Those old men say, who saw that day of sorrow and of sin,
That in the Roman Forum was never such a din.
The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls of grief and hate,
Were heard beyond the Pincian hill, beyond the Latin gate.
But close around the body, where stood the little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain,
No cries were there, but teeth set fast, low whispers, and black frowns,
And breaking up of benches, and girding up of gowns.
'Twas well the lictors might not pierce to where the maiden lay,
Else surely had they been all twelve torn limb from limb that day.
Right glad they were to struggle back, blood streaming from their heads,
With axes all in splinters, and raiment all in shreds.
Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip, and the blood left his cheek;
And thrice he beckoned with his hand, and thrice he strove to speak;
And thrice the tossing Forum sent up a frightful yell—
"See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done; and hide thy shame in hell!
Thou that wouldst make our maidens slaves, must first make slaves of men!
Tribunes!—Hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked Ten!"
And straightway, thick as hailstones, came whizzing through the air
Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all round the curule chair;

Digitized by Google

And upon Appius Claudius great fear and trembling came;
For never was a Claudius yet brave against aught but shame.
Though the great houses love us not, we own, to do them right,
That the great houses, all save one, have borne them well in fight.
Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs and his wrongs,
His vengeance and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.
Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan bowed;
And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is proud.
But evermore a Claudius shrinks from a stricken field,
And changes color like a maid at sight of sword and shield.
The Claudian triumphs all were won within the City-towers;
The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but ours.
A Cossus, like a wild-cat, springs ever at the face;
A Fabius rushes like a boar against the shouting chase;
But the vile Claudian litter, raging with currish spite,
Still yelps and snaps at those who run, still runs from those who smite.
So, now, 'twas seen of Appius. When stones began to fly,
He shook, and crouched, and wrung his hands, and smote upon his thigh:
"Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by me in this fray!
Must I be torn in pieces? Home, home the nearest way!"
While yet he spake, and looked around with a bewildered stare,
Four sturdy lictors put their necks beneath the curule chair;
And fourscore clients on the left, and fourscore on the right,
Arrayed themselves with swords and staves, and loins girt up for fight.
But, though without or staff or sword, so furious was the throng,
That scarce the train with might and main could bring their lord along.
Twelve times the crowd made at him; five times they seized his gown;
Small chance was his to rise again, if once they got him down:
And sharper came the pelting; and evermore the yell—
"Tribunes! we will have Tribunes!"—rose with a louder swell:
And the chair tossed as tosses a bark with tattered sail,
When raves the Adriatic beneath an eastern gale,
When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost in clouds of spume,
And the great Thunder-Cape has donned his veil of inky gloom.
One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and one beneath the ear;
And ere he reached Mount Palatine, he swooned with pain and fear.
His cursèd head, that he was wont to hold so high with pride,
Now, like a drunken man's, hung down and swayed from side to side;
And when his stout retainers had brought him to his door,
His face and neck were all one cake of filth and clotted gore.
As Appius Claudius was that day, so may his grandson be!
God send Rome one such other sight, and send me there to see!

* * * * * *

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE CAPITOL, ON THE DAY WHEN MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A SECOND TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED OVER KING PYRRHUS AND THE TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLXXIX.

Now slain is King Amulius,
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
Of the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber,
The mother to the tomb."

In Alba's lake no fisher
His net to-day is flinging:
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
To-day no axe is ringing:
The yoke hangs o'er the manger:
The scythe lies in the hay:
Through all the Alban villages
No work is done to-day.

And every Alban burgher
Hath donned his whitest gown;
And every head in Alba
Weareth a poplar crown;
And every Alban door-post
With boughs and flowers is gay;
For to-day the dead are living;
The lost are found to-day.

They were doomed by a bloody king:
They were doomed by a lying priest;
They were cast on the raging flood:
They were tracked by the raging beast.
Raging beast and raging flood
Alike have spared the prey;
And to-day the dead are living,
The lost are found to-day.

The troubled river knew them,
And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle
That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore.
Twenty winters, twenty springs,
Since then have rolled away;

Digitized by Google

And to-day the dead are living,
The lost are found to-day.

Blithe it was to see the twins,
Right goodly youths and tall,
Marching from Alba Longa
To their old grandsire's hall.
Along their path fresh garlands
Are hung from tree to tree;
Before them stride the pipers,
Piping a note of glee.

On the right goes Romulus,
With arms to the elbows red,
And in his hand a broadsword,
And on the blade a head—
A head in an iron helmet,
With horse-hair hanging down,
A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
Fixed in a ghastly frown—
The head of King Amulius
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.

On the left side goes Remus,
With wrists and fingers red,
And in his hand a boar-spear,
And on the point a head—
A wrinkled head and aged,
With silver beard and hair,
And holy fillets round it,
Such as the Pontiffs wear—
The head of ancient Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber,
The mother to the tomb."

Two and two behind the twins
Their trusty comrades go,
Four-and-twenty valiant men,
With club, and axe, and bow;
On each side every hamlet
Pours forth its joyous crowd,
Shouting lads, and baying dogs,
And children laughing loud,
And old men weeping fondly
As Rhea's boys go by,
And maids who shriek to see the heads,
Yet, shrieking, press more nigh.

So they marched along the lake;
They marched by fold and stall,
By corn-field and by vineyard,
Unto the old man's hall.

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
Capys, the sightless seer;
From head to foot he trembled
As Romulus drew near.
And up stood stiff his thin white hair,
And his blind eyes flashed fire:
"Hail! foster child of the wondrous nurse!
Hail! son of the wondrous sire!

"But thou—what dost thou here
In the old man's peaceful hall?
What doth the eagle in the coop,
The bison in the stall?
Our corn fills many a garner;
Our vines clasp many a tree;
Our flocks are white on many a hill;
But these are not for thee.

"For thee no treasure ripens
In the Tartessian mine:
For thee no ship brings precious bales
Across the Lybian brine:
Thou shalt not drink from amber;
Thou shalt not rest on down;
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

"Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man's seed are born,
Whom woman's milk hath fed.
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest;
Thou that art sprung from the War-god's loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf's breast.

"From sunrise until sunset
All earth shall hear thy fame:
A glorious city thou shalt build,
And name it by thy name:
And there unquenched through ages,
Like Vesta's sacred fire,
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
The spirit of thy sire.

"The ox toils through the furrow,
Obedient to the goad;
The patient ass, up flinty paths,
Plods with his weary load:
With whine and bound the spaniel
His master's whistle hears,
And the sheep yields her patiently
To the loud clashing shears.

"But thy nurse will hear no master,
Thy nurse will bear no load:
And woe to them that shear her,
And woe to them that goad!
When all the pack, loud baying,
Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence biting hard,
Amidst the dying hounds.

"Pomona loves the orchard;
And Liber loves the vine;
And Pales loves the straw-built shed
Warm with the breath of kine;
And Venus loves the whispers
Of plighted youth and maid,
In April's ivory moonlight
Beneath the chestnut shade.

"But thy father loves the clashing
Of broadsword and of shield:
He loves to drink the stream that reeks
From the fresh battle-field:
He smiles a smile more dreadful
Than his own dreadful frown,
When he sees the thick black cloud of smoke
Go up from the conquered town.

"And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,

Digitized by Google

And such as she who suckled thee,
  Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
  His baths and his perfumes;
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
  Their dyeing-vats and looms;
Leave to the sons of Carthage
  The rudder and the oar;
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs
  And scrolls of wordy lore.

"Thine, Roman, is the pilum:
  Roman, the sword is thine,
The even trench, the bristling mound,
  The legion's ordered line;
And thine the wheels of triumph,
  Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
  To Jove's eternal fane.

"Beneath thy yoke the Volscian
  Shall veil his lofty brow;
Soft Capua's curled revellers
  Before thy chair shall bow:
The Lucumoes of Arnus
  Shall quake thy rods to see:
And the proud Samnite's heart of steel
  Shall yield to only thee.

"The Gaul shall come against thee
  From the land of snow and night;
Thou shalt give his fair-haired armies
  To the raven and the kite.

"The Greek shall come against thee,
  The conqueror of the East.
Beside him stalks to battle
  The huge earth-shaking beast,
The beast on whom the castle
  With all its guards doth stand,
The beast who hath between his eyes
  The serpent for a hand.
First march the bold Epirotes,
  Wedged close with shield and spear;
And the ranks of false Tarentum
  Are glittering in the rear.

"The ranks of false Tarentum
  Like hunted sheep shall fly:
In vain the bold Epirotes
  Shall round their standards die:
And Apennine's gray vultures
  Shall have a noble feast
On the fat and on the eyes
  Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

"Hurrah! for the good weapons
  That keep the War-god's land.
Hurrah! for Rome's stout pilum
  In a stout Roman hand.
Hurrah! for Rome's short broadsword
  That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
  Hews deep its gory way.

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
  That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the wan captives
  That pass in endless file.
Ho! bold Epirotes, whither
  Hath the Red King taken flight?
Ho! dogs of false Tarentum,
  Is not the gown washed white?

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
  That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the rich dye of Tyre,
  And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage
  Torn from the pheasant's wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
  That shone on Indian kings,
The urns of massy silver,
  The goblets rough with gold,
The many-colored tablets bright
  With loves and wars of old,
The stone that breathes and struggles,
  The brass that seems to speak;—
Such cunning they who dwell on high
  Have given unto the Greek.

"Hurrah! for Manius Curius,
  The bravest son of Rome,
Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
  Thrice drawn in triumph home.
Weave, weave, for Manius Curius
  The third embroidered gown:
Make ready the third lofty car,
  And twine the third green crown,
And yoke the steeds of Rosea
  With necks like a bended bow:
And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
  The bull as white as snow.

"Blest and thrice blest the Roman
  Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees that long victorious pomp
  Wind down the Sacred Way,
And through the bellowing Forum,
  And round the Suppliant's grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
  Of Capitolian Jove.

"Then where, o'er two bright havens,
  The towers of Corinth frown;
Where the gigantic King of day
  On his own Rhodes looks down;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
  Beneath the laurel shades:
Where Nile reflects the endless length
  Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
  Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
  Of Byrsa's thousand masts:
Where fur-clad hunters wander
  Amidst the Northern ice;
Where through the sand of morning-land
  The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
  Far o'er the Western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
  The mighty name of Rome."

IVRY.

Now glory to the lord of hosts, from whom all glories are!
And glory to our sovereign liege, King Henry of Navarre!

Digitized by Google

Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,
Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France!
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters;
As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy;
For cold and stiff and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah! hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war!
Hurrah! hurrah! for Ivry, and King Henry of Navarre.

Oh! how our hearts were beating, when, at the dawn of day,
We saw the army of the League drawn out in long array; [peers,
With all its priest-led citizens, and all its rebel
And Appenzel's stout infantry, and Egmont's Flemish spears.
There rode the brood of false Lorraine, the curses of our land;
And dark Mayenne was in the midst, a truncheon in his hand;
And, as we looked on them, we thought of Seine's empurpled flood,
And good Coligni's hoary hair all dabbled with his blood;
And we cried unto the living God, who rules the fate of war,
To fight for his own holy name, and Henry of Navarre.

The king is come to marshal us, in all his armor dressed;
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.
He looked upon his people, and a tear was in his eye;
He looked upon the traitors, and his glance was stern and high.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line, in deafening shout: "God save our lord the king!"
"And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may—
For never I saw promise yet of such a bloody fray—
Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre."

Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din,
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin.
The fiery duke is pricking fast across Saint André's plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guelders and Almayne.
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies—upon them with the lance!
A thousand spurs are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed, while, like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours: Mayenne hath turned his rein;
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter; the Flemish count is slain;
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail.
And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van,
"Remember Saint Bartholomew!" was passed from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry—"No Frenchman is my foe:
Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go."
Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?

Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought for France to-day;
And many a lordly banner God gave them for a prey.
But we of the religion have borne us best in fight;
And the good lord of Rosny hath ta'en the cornet white— [ta'en,
Our own true Maximilian the cornet white hath
The cornet white with crosses black, the flag of false Lorraine.
Up with it high; unfurl it wide—that all the host may know
How God hath humbled the proud house which wrought his Church such woe.
Then on the ground, while trumpets sound their loudest point of war,
Fling the red shreds, a foot-cloth meet for Henry of Navarre.

Ho! maidens of Vienna; ho! matrons of Lucerne—
Weep, weep, and rend your hair for those who never shall return.
Ho! Philip, send, for charity, thy Mexican pistoles,
That Antwerp monks may sing a mass for thy poor spearmen's souls.
Ho! gallant nobles of the League, look that your arms be bright;
Ho! burghers of St. Genevieve, keep watch and ward to-night;
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised the slave,
And mocked the counsel of the wise, and the valor of the brave.
Then glory to his holy name, from whom all glories are;
And glory to our sovereign lord, King Henry of Navarre!

Digitized by Google

NASEBY.

Oh! wherefore come ye forth in triumph from the north,
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press that ye tread?

Oh! evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sate in the high places and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance and their cuirasses shine,
And the man of blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
And Astly, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The general rode along us to form us for the fight;
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swelled into a shout
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line:
"For God! for the cause! for the Church! for the laws!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!"

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks! Grasp your pikes! Close your ranks!
For Rupert never comes, but to conquer, or to fall.

They are here—they rush on—we are broken—we are gone—
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name! and fight it to the last!

Stout Skippen hath a wound—the centre hath given ground.
Hark! hark! what means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he! thank God! 'tis he, boys!
Bear up another minute! Brave Oliver is here!
Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row:
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dikes,
Our cuirassiers have burst the ranks of the accurst,
And at a shock hath scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar;
And he—he turns! he flies! shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war.

Ho, comrades! scour the plain; and ere ye strip the slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure;
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts were gay and bold,
When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans to-day;
And to-morrow shall the fox from her chambers in the rocks
Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl above the prey.

Where be your tongues, that late mocked at heaven, and hell, and fate?
And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades?
Your perfumed satin clothes, your catches, and your oaths?
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades?

Down! down! forever down, with the mitre and the crown!
With the Belial of the court, and the Mammon of the Pope!
There is woe in Oxford halls, there is wail in Durham's stalls;
The Jesuit smites his bosom, the bishop rends his cope.

And she of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword;
And the kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the houses and the word!

MONCONTOUR.—A SONG OF THE HUGUENOTS.

Oh! weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the hour
When the children of darkness and evil had power;

Digitized by Google

When the horsemen of Valois triumphantly trod
On the bosoms that bled for their rights and their God!

Oh! weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the slain,
Who for faith and for freedom lay slaughtered in vain.
Oh! weep for the living, who linger to bear
The renegade's shame, or the exile's despair!

One look, one last look, to the cots and the towers,
To the rows of our vines, and the beds of our flowers;
To the church where the bones of our fathers decayed,
Where we fondly had deemed that our own should be laid.

Alas! we must leave thee, dear desolate home,
To the spearmen of Uri, the shavelings of Rome;
To the serpent of Florence, the vulture of Spain,
To the pride of Anjou, and the guile of Lorraine.

Farewell to thy fountains, farewell to thy shades,
To the songs of thy youths, and the dance of thy maids;
To the breath of thy gardens, the hum of thy bees,
And the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees.

Farewell, and forever! The priest and the slave
May rule in the halls of the free and the brave;
Our hearths we abandon;—our lands we resign;
But, Father, we kneel at no altar but thine!

MY LADY.

O STAY Madonna, stay!,
'Tis not the dawn of day
That marks the skies with yonder opal streak;
The stars in silence shine;
Then press thy lips to mine,
And rest upon my neck thy fervid cheek.

O sleep, Madonna, sleep!
Leave me to watch and weep
O'er the sad memory of departed joys;
O'er hope's extinguished beam,
O'er fancy's vanished dream,
O'er all that Nature gives and man destroys.

O wake, Madonna, wake!
E'en now the purple lake
Is dappled o'er with amber flakes of light;
A glow is on the hill,
And every trickling rill
In golden threads leaps down from yonder height.

O fly, Madonna, fly!
Lest day and envy spy
What only love and night may safely know;
Fly, and tread softly, dear!
Lest those who hate us hear
The sounds of thy light footsteps as they go.

Digitized by Google

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED was born in London in 1802. He was the son of a wealthy lawyer. At Eton he was one of the editors of the *Etonian*. At Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained numerous prizes for poetry, he was a literary rival of Macaulay. While in College, he wrote for *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*. He graduated in 1825, studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1829. He married in 1835.

In 1830 Praed entered Parliament as member for St. Germain, Cornwall, and soon became prominent as a conservative. In 1834 he was appointed secretary of the Board of Control, and he subsequently received other offices, among them that of deputy high steward for the University of Cambridge. These offices he resigned in 1838, on account of failing health, and on the 15th of July, 1839, he died.

In our literature, Praed stands at the head of makers of *vers de société*. He not only put into that kind of composition an amount of real poetry which none of his competitors have attained, but even lifted the charade to the realm of true lyric verse. The first collection of his poems was made in Philadelphia in 1844; but it was far from complete, and contained one or two that were not his. A fuller edition, probably complete, was published in New York, in two volumes, in 1864.

LILLIAN.

At a small party at Cambridge, some malicious belles endeavored to confound their sonnetteering friends, by setting unintelligible and inexplicable subjects for the exercise of their poetical talents. Among many others, this thesis was given out:

"A dragon's tail is flayed to warm
A headless maiden's heart,"

and the following poem was an attempt to explain the riddle.

CANTO I.

THERE was a dragon in Arthur's time,
When dragons and griffins were voted "prime,"
Of monstrous reputation:
Up and down, and far and wide,
He roamed about in his scaly pride;
And ever, at morn and eventide,
He made such rivers of blood to run
As shocked the sight of the blushing sun,
And deluged half the nation.
It was a pretty monster, too,
With a crimson head, and a body blue,
And wings of a warm and delicate hue,
Like the glow of a deep carnation:
And the terrible tail that lay behind,
Reached out so far as it twisted and twined,
That a couple of dwarfs, of wondrous strength,
Bore, when he travelled, the horrible length,
Like a Duke's at the coronation.
His mouth had lost one ivory tooth,
Or the dragon had been, in very sooth,
No insignificant charmer;
And that—alas! he had ruined it,
When on new-year's day, in a hungry fit,
He swallowed a tough and a terrible bit—
Sir Lob, in his brazen armor.
Swift and light were his steps on the ground,
Strong and smooth was his hide around,
For the weapons which the peasants flung
Ever unfelt or unheeded rung,
Arrow, and stone, and spear,
As snow o'er Cynthia's window flits,
Or raillery of twenty wits
On a fool's unshrinking ear.

In many a battle the beast had been,
Many a blow he had felt and given:
Sir Digore came with a menacing mien,
But he sent Sir Digore straight to heaven;
Stiff and stour were the arms he wore,
Huge the sword he was wont to clasp;
But the sword was little, the armor brittle,
Locked in the coil of the dragon's grasp.

He came on Sir Florice of Sesseny Land,
Pretty Sir Florice from over the sea,
And smashed him all as he stepped on the sand,
Cracking his head like a nut from the tree.
No one, till now, had found, I trow,
Any thing good in the scented youth,
Who had taken much pains to be rid of his brains,
Before they were sought by the dragon's tooth.

He came on the Sheriff of Hereford,
As he sat him down to his Sunday dinner;
And the Sheriff he spoke but this brief word:
"St. Francis, be good to a corpulent sinner!"
Fat was he, as a Sheriff might be,
From the crown of his head to the tip of his toe;
But the Sheriff was small, or nothing at all,
When put in the jaws of the dragon foe.

He came on the Abbot of Arnondale,
As he kneeled him down to his morning devotion;
But the dragon he shuddered, and turned his tail
About "with a short uneasy motion."
Iron and steel, for an early meal,
He stomached with ease, or the Muse is a liar;

Digitized by Google

But out of all question, he failed in digestion,
  If ever he ventured to swallow a Friar!

Monstrous brute!—his dread renown
Made whispers and terrors in country and town!
Nothing was babbled by boor or knight,
But tales of his civic appetite.
At last, as after dinner he lay,
Hid from the heat of the solar ray,
By boughs that had woven an arbor shady,
He chanced to fall in with the Headless Lady.
Headless! alas! 'twas a piteous gibe:
I'll drink Aganippe, and then describe

Her father had been a stout yeoman,
Fond of his jest and fond of his can;
  But never over-wise;
And once, when his cups had been many and deep,
He met with a dragon fast asleep,
  'Twas a faery in disguise:

In a dragon's form she had ridden the storm,
  The realm of the sky invading;
Sir Grahame's ship was stout and fast,
But the faery came on the rushing blast,
And shivered the sails, and shivered the mast,
And down went the gallant ship at last,
  With all the crew and lading.
And the fay laughed out, to see the rout,
  As the last dim hope was fading;
And this she had done in a love of fun,
  And a love of masquerading.
She lay that night in a sunny vale,
And the yeoman found her sleeping;
Fiercely he smote her glittering tail,
But oh! his courage began to fail,
  When the faery rose all weeping,
"Thou hast lopped," she said, "beshrew thine hand!—
The fairest foot in faery land!

"Thou hast an infant in thine home!
Never to her shall reason come,
  For weeping or for wail,
Till she shall ride with a fearless face
  On a living dragon's scale,
And fondly clasp to her heart's embrace
  A living dragon's tail."
The faery's form from his shuddering sight
Flowed away in a stream of light.

Disconsolate that youth departed,
  Disconsolate and poor;
And wended, chill and broken-hearted,
  To his cottage on the moor;
Sadly and silently he knelt
  His lonely hearth beside;
Alas! how desolate he felt
  As he hid his face and cried.
The cradle where the babe was laid
  Stood in its own dear nook,
But long—how long! he knelt, and prayed,
  And did not dare to look.
He looked at last; his joy was there,
And slumbering with that placid air
Which only babes and angels wear.
Over the cradle he leaned his head:
The cheek was warm, and the lip was red;
And he felt, he felt, as he saw her lie,
A hope—which was a mockery.
The babe unclosed her eye's pale lid:—
Why doth he start from the sight it hid?
He hath seen in the dim and fitful ray,
That the light of the soul hath gone away!
Sigh nor prayer he uttered there,
In mute and motionless despair,
But he laid him down beside his child,
And Lillian saw him die—and smiled.
The mother! she had gone before;
And in the cottage on the moor,
With none to watch her and caress,
No arm to clasp, no voice to bless,
The witless child grew up alone,
And made all Nature's book her own.

If, in the warm and passionate hour
When Reason sleeps in Fancy's bower,
If thou hast ever, ever felt
A dream of delicate beauty melt
  Into the heart's recess,
Seen by the soul, and seen by the mind,
  But indistinct its loveliness,
Adored, and not defined;
A bright creation, a shadowy ray,
Fading and flitting in mist away,
Nothing to gaze on, and nothing to hear,
But something to cheat the eye and ear
With a fond conception and joy of both,
So that you might, that hour, be loath
To change for some one's sweetest kiss
The visions of unenduring bliss,
Or lose some one's sweetest tone,
The murmur thou drinkest all alone—
If such a vision hath ever been thine,
Thou hast a heart that may look on mine!

For, oh! the light of my saddened theme
Was like to naught but a poet's dream,
Or the forms that come on the twilight's wing,
Shaped by the soul's imagining.
Beautiful shade, with her tranquil air,
And her thin white arm, and her flowing hair,
And the light of her eye so boldly obscure,
And the hue of her cheek so pale and pure!
Reason and thought she had never known,
Her heart was as cold as a heart of stone;
So you might guess from her eyes' dim rays,
And her idiot laugh, and her vacant gaze.
She wandered about all lone on the heather,
She and the wild heath-birds together;
For Lillian seldom spoke or smiled,
But she sang as sweet as a little child.
Into her song her dreams would throng,
  Silly, and wild, and out of place;
And yet that wild and roving song
  Entranced the soul in its desolate grace.
And hence the story had ever run,
That the fairest of dames was a headless one.

The pilgrim in his foreign weeds
  Would falter in his prayer;
And the monk would pause in his half-told beads
  To breathe a blessing there:
The knight would loose his visor-clasp,
And drop the rein from his nerveless grasp,
And pass his hand across his brow
With a sudden sigh, and a whispered vow,
And marvel Flattery's tale was told,
From a lip so young to an ear so cold.

Digitized by Google

She had seen her sixteenth winter out,
When she met with the beast I am singing about:
The dragon, I told you, had dined that day;
So he gazed upon her as he lay,
Earnestly looking, and looking long,
With his appetite weak and his wonder strong.
Silent he lay in his motionless coil;
And the song of the lady was sweet the while:

"Nonny Nonny! I hear it float,
Innocent bird, thy tremulous note:
It comes from thy home in the eglantine,
And I stay this idle song of mine,
Nonny Nonny! to listen to thine!

"Nonny Nonny! 'Lillian sings
The sweetest of all living things!'
So Sir Launcelot averred;
But surely Sir Launcelot never heard
Nonny Nonny! the natural bird!"

The dragon he lay in mute amaze,
Till something of kindness crept into his gaze;
He drew the flames of his nostrils in,
He veiled his claws with their speckled skin,
He curled his fangs in a hideous smile;
And the song of the lady was sweet the while—

"Nonny Nonny! who shall tell
Where the summer breezes dwell?
Lightly and brightly they breathe and blow,
But whence they come and whither they go,
Nonny Nonny! who shall know?

"Nonny Nonny! I hear your tone,
But I feel ye cannot read mine own;
And I lift my neck to your fond embraces,
But who hath seen in your resting-places,
Nonny Nonny! your beautiful faces?"

A moment! and the dragon came
Crouching down to the peerless dame,
With his fierce red eye so fondly shining,
And his terrible tail so meekly twining,
And the scales on his huge limbs gleaming o'er,
Gayer than ever they gleamed before.

She had won his heart, while she charmed his ear,
And Lillian smiled, and knew no fear.
And see, she mounts between his wings;
(Never a queen had a gaudier throne,)
And faery-like she sits and sings,
Guiding the steed with a touch and a tone.
Aloft, aloft in the clear blue ether,
The dame and the dragon they soared together;
He bore her away on the breath of the gale—
The two little dwarfs held fast by the tail.

Fanny! a pretty group for drawing;
My dragon like a war-horse pawing,
My dwarfs in a fright, and my girl in an attitude,
Patting the beast in her soulless gratitude.
There; you may try it if you will,
While I drink my coffee and nib my quill.

CANTO II.

The sun shone out on hill and grove;
It was a glorious day,
The lords and ladies were making love,
And the clowns were making hay;
But the town of Brentford marked with wonder
A lightning in the sky, and thunder,
And thinking ('twas a thinking town)
Some prodigy was coming down,
A mighty mob to Merlin went,
To learn the cause of this portent;
And he, a wizard sage, but comical,
Looked through his glasses astronomical,
And puzzled every foolish sconce
By this oracular response:

"*Now the slayer doth not slay,*
Weakness flings her fear away,
Power bears the powerless,
Pity rides the pityless;
Are ye lovers? are ye brave?
Hear ye this, and seek, and save!
He that would wed the loveliest maid,
Must don the stoutest mail,
For the rider shall never be sound in the head,
Till the ridden be maimed in the tail.
Hey diddle diddle! the cat and the fiddle!
None but the lover can read me my riddle!"

How kind art thou, and oh! how mighty,
Cupid! thou son of Aphrodite!
By thy sole aid, in old romance,
Heroes and heroines sing and dance;
Of cane and rod there's little need;
They never learn to write or read;
Yet often, by thy sudden light,
Enamoured dames contrive to write;
And often, in the hour of need,
Enamoured youths contrive to read.
(I make a small digression here:
I merely mean to make it clear,
That if Sir Eglamour had wit
To read and construe, bit by bit,
All that the wizard had expressed,
And start conjectures on the rest,
Cupid had sharpened his discerning,
The little god of love and learning.)
He revolved in his bed, what Merlin had said,
Though Merlin had labored to scatter a veil on't;
And found out the sense of the tail and the head,
Though none of his neighbors could make head or tail on't.

Sir Eglamour was one o' the best
Of Arthur's table round;
He never set his spear in rest,
But a dozen went to the ground.
Clear and warm as the lightning-flame,
His valor from his father came,
His cheek was like his mother's;
And his hazel eye more clearly shone
Than any I ever have looked upon,
Save Fanny's and two others!
With his spur so bright, and his rein so light,
And his steed so swift and ready,

Digitized by Google

And his skillful sword, to wound or ward,
  And his spear so sure and steady;
He bore him like a British knight
  From London to Penzance;
Avenged all weeping women's slight,
  And made all giants dance.
And he had travelled far from home,
  Had worn a mask at Venice,
Had kissed the Bishop's toe at Rome,
  And beat the French at tennis:
Hence he had many a courtly play,
  And jeerings and jibes in plenty,
And he wrote more rhymes in a single day
  Than Byron or Bowles in twenty.

He clasped to his side his sword of pride,
His sword, whose native polish vied
  With many a gory stain;
Keen and bright as a meteor-light;
But not so keen and not so bright,
  As Moultrie's * jesting vein.
And his shield he bound his arm around,
His shield, whose dark and dingy round,
  Naught human could get through;
Heavy and thick as a wall of brick,
But not so heavy and not so thick
  As Roberts's Review.†
With a smile and a jest he set out on the quest,
  Clad in his stoutest mail,
With his helm of the best, and his spear in the rest,
  To flay the dragon's tail.
  The warrior travelled wearily,
  Many a league and many a mile;
And the dragon sailed in the clear blue sky;
  And the song of the lady was sweet the while:

"My steed and I, my steed and I,
On the path of the winds we fly,
And I chase the planets that wander at even,
And bathe my hair in the dews of heaven!
Beautiful stars, so thin and bright,
Exquisite visions of vapor and light,
I love ye all with a sister's love,
And I rove with ye wherever ye rove,
And I drink your changeless, endless song,
The music ye make as ye wander along!
Oh! let me be, as one of ye,
Floating for aye on your liquid sea;
And I'll feast with you on the purest rain
To cool my weak and wildered brain,
And I'll give you the loveliest lock of my hair
For a little spot in your realm of air!"

The dragon came down when the morn shone bright,
  And slept in the beam of the sun;
Fatigued, no doubt, with his airy flight,
  As I with my jingling one.
With such a monstrous adversary
Sir Eglamour was far too wary
  To think of bandying knocks;

He came on his foe as still as death,
Walking on tiptoe, and holding his breath,
And instead of drawing his sword from his sheath
  He drew a pepper-box!
The pepper was as hot as flame,
  The box of a wondrous size;
He gazed one moment on the dame,
Then, with a sure and steady aim,
Full in the dragon's truculent phiz
He flung the scorching powder—whiz!
  And darkened both his eyes!

Have you not seen a little kite
  Rushing away on its paper wing,
  To mix with the wild winds' quarrelling?
Up it soars with an arrowy flight,
    Till, weak and unsteady,
    Torn by the eddy,
It dashes to earth from its hideous height?
Such was the rise of the beast in his pain,
Such was his falling to earth again;
Upward he shot, but he saw not his path,
Blinded with pepper, and blinded with wrath;
One struggle—one vain one—of pain and emotion!
And he shot back again, "like a bird of the ocean!"
Long he lay in a trance that day,
And alas! he did not wake before
The cruel knight, with skill and might,
  Had lopped and flayed the tail he wore.

Twelve hours by the chime he lay in his slime,
  More utterly blind, I trow,
Than a Polypheme in the olden time,
  Or a politician now.
He sped, as soon as he could see,
To the Paynim bowers of Rosalie;
For there the dragon had hope to cure,
By the tinkling rivulets, ever pure,
By the glowing sun, and fragrant gale,
His wounded honor, and wounded tail!
He hied him away to the perfumed spot:
The little dwarfs clung—where the tail was not!
The damsel gazed on that young knight,
With something of terror, but more of delight;
Much she admired the gauntlets he wore,
Much the device that his buckler bore,
Much the feathers that danced on his crest,
But most the baldric that shone on his breast.
She thought the dragon's pilfered scale
Was fairer far than the warrior's mail,
And she lifted it up with her weak white arm,
Unconscious of its hidden charm,
And round her throbbing bosom tied,
In mimicry of warlike pride.

  Gone is the spell that bound her!
The talisman hath touched her heart,
And she leaps with a fearful and fawn-like start
As the shades of glamory depart—
Strange thoughts are glimmering round her;
Deeper and deeper her cheek is glowing,
Quicker and quicker her breath is flowing,
And her eye gleams out from its long dark lashes,
Fast and full, unnatural flashes;
  For hurriedly and wild
Doth Reason pour her hidden treasures,
Of human griefs, and human pleasures,
  Upon her new-found child.

* Rev. John Moultrie, who, in 1823 (when many manuscript copies of "Lillian" were in circulation), wrote some beautiful and pathetic lyrics, some of which appeared in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine.*

† "My Grandmother's Review—the British."—*Don Juan.* Roberts was the editor.—*Vide Byron's celebrated Letter to him.*

Digitized by Google

And "oh!" she saith, "my spirit doth seem
To have risen to-day from a pleasant dream;
A long, long dream—but I feel it breaking!
Painfully sweet is the throb of waking;"
And then she laughed and wept again:
While, gazing on her heart's first rain,
Bound in its turn by a magic chain,
The silent youth stood there:
Never had either been so blest;—
You that are young may picture the rest,
You that are young and fair.
Never before, on this warm land,
Came Love and Reason hand in hand.

When you are blest, in childhood's years,
With the brightest hopes and the lightest fears,
Have you not wandered, in your dream,
Where a greener glow was on the ground,
And a clearer breath in the air around,
And a purer life in the gay sunbeam,
And a tremulous murmur in every tree,
And a motionless sleep on the quiet sea?
And have you not lingered, lingered still,
All unfettered in thought and will,
A fair and cherished boy;
Until you felt it pain to part
From the wild creations of your art,
Until your young and innocent heart
Seemed bursting with its joy?
And then, oh then, hath your waking eye
Opened in all its ecstasy,
And seen your mother leaning o'er you,
The loved and loving one that bore you,
Giving her own, her fond caress,
And looking her eloquent tenderness!
Was it not heaven to fly from the scene
Where the heart in the vision of night had been,
And drink, in one o'erflowing kiss,
Your deep reality of bliss?
Such was Lillian's passionate madness,
Such the calm of her waking gladness.

Enough! my tale is all too long:
Fair children, if the trifling song,
That flows for you to-night,
Hath stolen from you one gay laugh,
Or given your quiet hearts to quaff
One cup of young delight,
Pay ye the rhymer for his toils
In the coinage of your golden smiles,
And treasure up his idle verse,
With the stories ye loved from the lips of your nurse.

THE VICAR.

Some years ago, ere Time and Taste
Had turned our parish topsy-turvy,
When Darnel Park was Darnel Waste,
And roads as little known as scurvy,
The man who lost his way between
St. Mary's Hill and Sandy Thicket
Was always shown across the Green,
And guided to the Parson's wicket.

Back flew the bolt of lisson lath;
Fair Margaret, in her tidy kirtle,
Led the lorn traveller up the path,
Through clean-clipped rows of box and myrtle:
And Don and Sancho, Tramp and Tray,
Upon the parlor steps collected,
Wagged all their tails and seemed to say,
"Our master knows you; you're expected!"

Up rose the Reverend Dr. Brown,
Up rose the Doctor's "winsome marrow;"
The lady lay her knitting down,
Her husband clasped his ponderous Barrow;
Whate'er the stranger's caste or creed,
Pundit or papist, saint or sinner,
He found a stable for his steed,
And welcome for himself, and dinner.

If, when he reached his journey's end,
And warmed himself in court or college,
He had not gained an honest friend,
And twenty curious scraps of knowledge;—
If he departed as he came,
With no new light on love or liquor—
Good sooth, the traveller was to blame,
And not the Vicarage, or the Vicar.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses:
It slipped from politics to puns:
It passed from Mahomet to Moses:
Beginning with the laws which keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels or shoeing horses.

He was a shrewd and sound divine,
Of loud Dissent the mortal terror;
And when, by dint of page and line,
He 'stablished Truth, or startled Error,
The Baptist found him far too deep;
The Deist sighed with saving sorrow:
And the lean Levite went to sleep,
And dreamed of tasting pork to-morrow.

His sermon never said or showed
That Earth is foul, that Heaven is gracious,
Without refreshment on the road
From Jerome, or from Athanasius;
And sure a righteous zeal inspired
The hand and head that penned and planned them,
For all who understood, admired,
And some who did not understand them.

He wrote, too, in a quiet way,
Small treatises, and smaller verses;
And sage remarks on chalk and clay,
And hints to noble lords and nurses;
True histories of last year's ghost,
Lines to a ringlet or a turban;
And trifles for the *Morning Post*,
And nothing for Sylvanus Urban.

He did not think all mischief fair,
Although he had a knack of joking;
He did not make himself a bear,
Although he had a taste for smoking:
And when religious sects ran mad,
He held, in spite of all his learning,
That if a man's belief is bad,
It will not be improved by burning.
And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garnished cottage,

Digitized by Google

And praise the farmer's homely wit,
  And share the widow's homelier pottage:
At his approach complaint grew mild,
  And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of Fever smiled
  The welcome which they could not utter.

He always had a tale for me
  Of Julius Cæsar or of Venus:
From him I learned the rule of three,
  Cat's cradle, leap-frog, and Quæ genus;
I used to singe his powdered wig,
  To steal the staff he put such trust in;
And make the puppy dance a jig
  When he began to quote Augustin.

Alack the change! in vain I look
  For haunts in which my boyhood trifled;
The level lawn, the trickling brook,
  The trees I climbed, the beds I rifled:
The church is larger than before;
  You reach it by a carriage entry:
It holds three hundred people more:
  And pews are fitted up for gentry.

Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear
  The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
  Whose tone is very Ciceronian.
Where is the old man laid?—look down,
  And construe on the slab before you,
"Hic Jacet GULIELMUS BROWN,
  Vir Nulla non donandus laura."

THE BELLE OF THE BALL.

Years—years ago—ere yet my dreams
  Had been of being wise and witty;
Ere I had done with writing themes,
  Or yawned o'er this infernal Chitty;
Years, years ago, while all my joys
  Were in my fowling-piece and filly;
In short, while I was yet a boy,
  I fell in love with Laura Lilly.

I saw her at a country ball;
  There when the sound of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall,
  Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far
  Of all that set young hearts romancing:
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
  And when she danced—oh, heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white;
  Her voice was exquisitely tender,
Her eyes were full of liquid light;
  I never saw a waist so slender;
Her very look, her very smile,
  Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 'twas Venus from her isle,
  I wondered where she'd left her sparrows.

She talked of politics or prayers;
  Of Southey's prose, or Wordsworth's sonnets;
Of daggers or of dancing bears,
  Of battles, or the last new bonnets;
By candle-light, at twelve o'clock,
  To me it mattered not a tittle,
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
  I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
  I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
  I wrote them for the *Sunday Journal.*
My mother laughed; I soon found out
  That ancient ladies have no feeling;
My father frowned; but how should gout
  Find any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a dean,
  Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic;
She had one brother just thirteen,
  Whose color was extremely hectic;
Her grandmother for many a year
  Had fed the parish with her bounty;
Her second-cousin was a peer,
  And lord-lieutenant of the county.

But titles and the three per cents,
  And mortgages, and great relations,
And India bonds, and tithes and rents,
  Oh! what are they to love's sensations?
Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks,
  Such wealth, such honors, Cupid chooses;
He cares as little for the stocks,
  As Baron Rothschild for the muses.

She sketched; the vale, the wood, the beach,
  Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading;
She botanized; I envied each
  Young blossom in her boudoir fading;
She warbled Händel; it was grand—
  She made the Catalani jealous;
She touched the organ; I could stand
  For hours and hours and blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
  Well filled with all an album's glories:
Paintings of butterflies and Rome,
  Patterns of trimmings, Persian stories;
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,
  Fierce odes to famine and to slaughter;
And autographs of Prince Leboo,
  And recipes of elder-water.

And she was flattered, worshipped, bored,
  Her steps were watched, her dress was noted,
Her poodle-dog was quite adored,
  Her sayings were extremely quoted.
She laughed and every heart was glad,
  As if the taxes were abolished;
She frowned, and every look was sad,
  As if the opera were demolished.

She smiled on many just for fun—
  I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first, the only one
  Her heart had thought of for a minute;
I knew it, for she told me so,
  In phrase which was divinely moulded;
She wrote a charming hand, and oh!
  How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves—
  A little glow, a little shiver;

Digitized by Google

A rosebud and a pair of gloves,
And "Fly not yet," upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted,
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows—and then we parted.

We parted—months and years rolled by;
We met again four summers after;
Our parting was all sob and sigh—
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter;
For in my heart's most secret cell
There had been many other lodgers;
And she was not the ballroom belle,
But only Mrs.—Something—Rogers.

OUR BALL.

You'll come to our ball—since we parted,
I've thought of you more than I'll say;
Indeed, I was half broken-hearted
For a week, when they took you away.
Fond fancy brought back to my slumbers
Our walks on the Ness and the Den,
And echoed the musical numbers
Which you used to sing to me then.
I know the romance, since it's over,
'Twere idle, or worse, to recall;—
I know you're a terrible rover;
But, Clarence, you'll come to our Ball!

It's only a year since, at College,
You put on your cap and your gown;
But, Clarence, you've grown out of knowledge,
And changed from the spur to the crown:
The voice that was best when it faltered,
Is fuller and firmer in tone:
And the smile that should never have altered—
Dear Clarence—it is not your own;
Your cravat was badly selected,
Your coat don't become you at all;
And why is your hair so neglected?
You must have it curled for our Ball.

I've often been out upon Haldon
To look for a covey with Pup;
I've often been over to Shaldon,
To see how your boat is laid up.
In spite of the terrors of Aunty,
I've ridden the filly you broke;
And I've studied your sweet little Dante
In the shade of your favorite oak:
When I sat in July to Sir Lawrence,
I sat in your love of a shawl;
And I'll wear what you brought me from Florence,
Perhaps, if you'll come to our Ball.

You'll find us all changed since you vanished;
We've set up a National School;
And waltzing is utterly banished;
And Ellen has married a fool;
The Major is going to travel;
Miss Hyacinth threatens a rout;
The walk is laid down with fresh gravel;
Papa is laid up with the gout:
And Jane has gone on with her easels,
And Anne has gone off with Sir Paul;
And Fanny is sick with the measles—
And I'll tell you the rest at the Ball.

You'll meet all your beauties;—the Lily
And the Fairy of Willowbrook Farm,
And Lucy, who made me so silly
At Dawlish, by taking your arm!
Miss Manners, who always abused you,
For talking so much about Hock;
And her sister who often amused you,
By raving of rebels and Rock;
And something which surely would answer,
An heiress quite fresh from Bengal;—
So, though you were seldom a dancer,
You'll dance, just for once, at our Ball.

But out on the world!—from the flowers
It shuts out the sunshine of truth:
It blights the green leaves in the bowers,
It makes an old age of our youth;
And the flow of our feeling, once in it,
Like a streamlet beginning to freeze,
Though it cannot turn ice in a minute,
Grows harder by sudden degrees.
Time treads o'er the graves of affection;
Sweet honey is turned into gall;
Perhaps you have no recollection
That ever you danced at our Ball.

You once could be pleased with our ballads—
To-day you have critical ears;
You once could be charmed with our salads;
Alas! you've been dining with Peers;
You trifled and flirted with many;
You've forgotten the when and the how;
There was one you liked better than any;
Perhaps you've forgotten her now.
But of those you remember most newly,
Of those who delight or enthral,
None love you a quarter so truly
As some you will find at our Ball.

They tell me you've many who flatter,
Because of your wit and your song;
They tell me (and what does it matter?)
You like to be praised by the throng;
They tell me you're shadowed with laurel,
They tell me you're loved by a Blue;
They tell me you're sadly immoral—
Dear Clarence, that cannot be true!
But to me you are still what I found you
Before you grew clever and tall;
And you'll think of the spell that once bound you:
And you'll come, won't you come? to our Ball?

TWENTY-EIGHT AND TWENTY-NINE.

I heard a sick man's dying sigh,
And an infant's idle laughter.
The Old Year went with mourning by—
The New came dancing after!
Let Sorrow shed her lonely tear,
Let Revelry hold her ladle;
Bring boughs of cypress for the bier,
Fling roses on the cradle;

Digitized by Google

Mutes to wait on the funeral state;
  Pages to pour the wine;
A requiem for Twenty-Eight,
  And a health to Twenty-Nine!

Alas for human happiness!
  Alas for human sorrow!
Our yesterday is nothingness,
  What else will be our morrow?
Still Beauty must be stealing hearts,
  And Knavery stealing purses;
Still cooks must live by making tarts,
  And wits by making verses;
While sages prate and courts debate,
  The same stars set and shine;
And the world as it rolled through Twenty-Eight
  Must roll through Twenty-Nine.

Some King will come, in Heaven's good time,
  To the tomb his father came to;
Some thief will wade through blood and crime
  To a crown he has no claim to;
Some suffering land will rend in twain
  The manacles that bound her;
And gather the links of the broken chain
  To fasten them proudly round her;
The grand and great will love and hate,
  And combat and combine;
And much where we were in Twenty-Eight
  We shall be in Twenty-Nine.

O'Connell will toil to raise the Rent,
  And Kenyon to sink the Nation;
And Shiel will abuse the Parliament,
  And Peel the Association;
And thought of bayonets and swords
  Will make ex-Chancellors merry;
And jokes will be cut in the House of Lords,
  And throats in the County of Kerry;
And writers of weight will speculate
  On the Cabinet's design;
And just what it did in Twenty-Eight
  It will do in Twenty-Nine.

And the Goddess of Love will keep her smiles,
  And the God of Cups his orgies;
And there'll be riots in St. Giles,
  And weddings in St. George's;
And mendicants will sup like Kings,
  And Lords will swear like lacqueys;
And black eyes oft will lead to rings,
  And rings will lead to black eyes;
And pretty Kate will scold her mate,
  In a dialect all divine;
Alas! they married in Twenty-Eight,
  They will part in Twenty-Nine.

My uncle will swathe his gouty limbs,
  And talk of his oils and blubbers;
My aunt, Miss Dobbs, will play longer hymns,
  And rather longer rubbers;
My cousin in Parliament will prove
  How utterly ruined trade is;
My brother, at Eton, will fall in love
  With half a hundred ladies;
My patron will sate his pride from plate,
  And his thirst from Bordeaux wine:
His nose was red in Twenty-Eight,
  'Twill be redder in Twenty-Nine.

And oh! I shall find how, day by day,
  All thoughts and things look older;
How the laugh of Pleasure grows less gay;
  And the heart of Friendship colder;
But still I shall be what I have been,
  Sworn foe to Lady Reason,
And seldom troubled with the spleen,
  And fond of talking treason;
I shall buckle my skate, and leap my gate,
  And throw and write my line;
And the woman I worshipped in Twenty-Eight
  I shall worship in Twenty-Nine.

TO ——.

We met but in one giddy dance,
  Good-night joined hands with greeting;
And twenty thousand things may chance
  Before our second meeting.
For oh! I have been often told
  That all the world grows older,
And hearts and hopes to-day so cold,
  To-morrow must be colder.

If I have never touched the string
  Beneath your chamber, dear one,
And never said one civil thing
  When you were by to hear one;
If I have made no rhymes about
  Those looks which conquer stoics,
And heard those angel tones, without
  One fit of fair heroics—

Yet do not, though the world's cold school
  Some bitter truths has taught me,
Oh, do not deem me quite the fool
  Which wiser friends have thought me!
There is one charm I still could feel,
  If no one laughed at feeling;
One dream my lute could still reveal,
  If it were worth revealing.

But Folly little cares what name
  Of friend or foe she handles,
When merriment directs the game,
  And midnight dims the candles;
I know that Folly's breath is weak
  And would not stir a feather;
But yet I would not have her speak
  Your name and mine together.

Oh no! this life is dark and bright,
  Half rapture and half sorrow;
My heart is very full to-night,
  My cup shall be to-morrow;
But they shall never know from me,
  On any one condition,
Whose health made bright my Burgundy,
  Whose beauty was my vision.

WHERE IS MISS MYRTLE?

Where is Miss Myrtle? can any one tell?
  Where is she gone, where is she gone?
She flirts with another, I know very well;
  And I—am left all alone!

Digitized by Google

She flies to the window when Arundel rings;
She's all over smiles when Lord Archibald sings;
It's plain that her Cupid has two pair of wings:
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
Her love and my love are different things;
And I—am left all alone!

I brought her, one morning, a rose for her brow;
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
She told me such horrors were never worn now;
And I—am left all alone!
But I saw her at night with a rose in her hair,
And I guess whom it came from—of course I don't care!
We all know that girls are as false as they're fair;
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
I'm sure the lieutenant's a terrible bear;
And I—am left all alone!

Whenever we go on the Downs for a ride,
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
She looks for another to trot by her side;
And I—am left all alone!
And whenever I take her down-stairs from a ball,
She nodds to some puppy to put on her shawl;
I'm a peaceable man, and I don't like a brawl;
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
But I would give a trifle to horsewhip them all;
And I—am left all alone!

She tells me her mother belongs to the sect,
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
Which holds that all waltzing is quite incorrect:
And I—am left all alone!
But a fire's in my heart, and a fire's in my brain,
When she waltzes away with Sir Phelim O'Shane;
I don't think I ever *can* ask her again;
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
And, Lord! since the summer she's grown very plain;
And I—am left all alone!

She said that she liked me a twelvemonth ago;
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
And how should I guess that she'd torture me so?
And I—am left all alone!
Some day she'll find out it was not very wise
To laugh at the breath of a true lover's sighs;
After all, Fanny Myrtle is not such a prize:
Where is she gone, where is she gone?
Louisa Dalrymple has exquisite eyes;
And I'll be no longer alone!

CHILDHOOD AND HIS VISITORS.

Once on a time, when sunny May
Was kissing up the April showers,
I saw fair Childhood hard at play
Upon a bank of blushing flowers:
Happy—he knew not whence or how,
And smiling—who could choose but love him?
For not more glad than Childhood's brow
Was the blue heaven that beamed above him.

Old Time, in most appalling wrath,
That valley's green repose invaded;
The brooks grew dry upon his path,
The birds were mute, the lilies faded.
But Time so swiftly winged his flight,
In haste a Grecian tomb to batter
That Childhood watched his paper kite,
And knew just nothing of the matter.

With curling lip and glancing eye,
Guilt gazed upon the scene a minute;
But Childhood's glance of purity
Had such a holy spell within it,
That the dark demon to the air
Spread forth again his baffled pinion,
And hid his envy and despair,
Self-tortured, in his own dominion.

Then stepped a gloomy phantom up,
Pale, cypress-crowned Night's awful daughter,
And proffered him a fearful cup,
Full to the brim of bitter water.
Poor Childhood bade her tell her name,
And when the beldame muttered, "Sorrow,"
He said, "Don't interrupt my game!
I'll taste it, if I must, to-morrow."

The Muse of Pindus thither came,
And wooed him with the softest numbers
That ever scattered wealth and fame
Upon a youthful poet's slumbers.
Though sweet the music of the lay,
To Childhood it was all a riddle;
And "Oh," he cried, "do send away
That noisy woman with the fiddle!"

Then Wisdom stole his bat and ball,
And taught him, with most sage endeavor,
Why bubbles rise and acorns fall,
And why no toy may last forever:
She talked of all the wondrous laws
Which Nature's open book discloses;
And Childhood, ere she made a pause,
Was fast asleep among the roses.

Sleep on, sleep on!—oh, manhood's dreams
Are all of earthly pain or pleasure,
Of glory's toils, ambition's schemes,
Of cherished love, or hoarded treasure;
But to the couch where Childhood lies
A more delicious trance is given,
Lit up by rays from seraph-eyes,
And glimpses of remembered heaven.

I REMEMBER.

I remember, I remember,
How my childhood fleeted by—
The mirth of its December,
And the warmth of its July;
On my brow, love, on my brow, love,
There are no signs of care,
But my pleasures are not now, love,
What childhood's pleasures were:

Then the bowers, then the bowers,
Were as blithe as blithe could be,
And all their radiant flowers
Were coronals to me:
Gems to-night, love, gems to-night, love,
Are gleaming in my hair;
But they are not half so bright, love,
As childhood's roses were.

Digitized by Google

I was singing, I was singing,
And my songs were idle words;
But from my heart was springing
Wild music like a bird's.
Now I sing, love—now I sing, love,
A fine Italian air;
But it's not so glad a thing, love,
As childhood's ballads were.

I was merry, I was merry,
When my little lovers came—
With a lily, or a cherry,
Or a new invented game:
Now I've you, love, now I've you, love,
To kneel before me there;
But you know you're not so true, love,
As childhood's lovers were.

LYRICAL CHARADES.

I.

The First is for love and thee, Mary,—
The First is for love and thee;
And so firmly hold
Those links of gold,
That the Second it never shall be, Mary!

The Second is ever free, Mary,—
Free as the foaming brine;
As the fires that fly
From the poet's eye,
Or the laugh that speaks in thine, Mary!

Though the First be a wayward thing, Mary,—
Though a wayward thing it be,
When thought hath power
In the midnight hour,
Be sure it is ever with thee, Mary!

II.

The Indian lover burst
From his lone cot by night;—
When Love hath lit my First
In hearts by Passion nurst,
Oh, who shall quench the light?
The Indian left the shore:
He heard the night-wind sing,
And cursed the tardy oar,
And wished that he could soar,
Upon my Second's wing.

The blast came cold and damp;
But, all the voyage through,
I lent my lingering lamp,
As o'er the marshy swamp
He paddled his canoe.

III.

On the casement frame the wind beat high;
Never a star was in the sky;
All Kenneth Hold was wrapped in gloom;
And Sir Everard slept in the Haunted Room.

I sat and sang beside his bed:
Never a single word I said,
Yet did I scare his slumber;
And a fitful light in his eyeball glistened,
And his cheek grew pale as he lay and listened;
For he thought, or he dreamed, that fiends and fays
Were reckoning o'er his fleeting days,
And telling out their number.
Was it my Second's ceaseless tone?
On my Second's hand he laid his own:
The hand that trembled in his grasp
Was crushed by his convulsive clasp.
Sir Everard did not fear my First:
He had seen it in shapes that men deem worst
In many a field and flood;
Yet, in the darkness of that dread,
His tongue was parched, and his reason fled;
And he watched, as the lamp burned low and dim,
To see some phantom, gaunt and grim,
Come dabbled o'er with blood.

Sir Everard kneeled, and strove to pray:
He prayed for light, and he prayed for day,
Till terror checked his prayer;
And ever I muttered, clear and well,
"Click, click, click," like a tolling bell,
Till, bound by Fancy's magic spell,
Sir Everard fainted there.

And oft, from that remembered night,
Around the taper's flickering light,
The wrinkled beldames told
Sir Everard had knowledge won
Of many a murder darkly done,
Of fearful sights and fearful sounds,
And ghosts that walk their midnight rounds,
In the Tower of Kenneth Hold!

IV.

Row on, row on! The First may light
My shallop o'er the wave to-night;
But she will hide in a little while
The lustre of her silent smile;
For fickle she is, and changeful still,
As a madman's wish, or a woman's will.

Row on, row on! The Second is high
In my own bright lady's balcony;
And she, beside it, pale and mute,
Untold her beads, untouched her lute,
Is wondering why her lover's skiff
So slowly glides to the lonely cliff.

Row on, row on! When the Whole is fled,
The song will be hushed, and the rapture dead;
And I must go in my grief again
To the toils of day and the haunts of men,
To a future of fear, and a present of care,
And memory's dream of the things that were.

V.

When Ralph by holy hands was tied
For life to blooming Cis,
Sir Thrifty, too, drove home his bride,
A fashionable Miss:
That day, my First, with jovial sound,
Proclaimed the happy tale;
And drunk was all the country round
With pleasure—or with ale.

Digitized by Google

Oh, why should Hymen ever blight
  The roses Cupid wore?
Or why should it be ever night
  Where it was day before?
Or why should women have a tongue?
  Or why should it be cursed
In being, like my Second, long,
  And louder than my First?

"You blackguard!" cries the rural wench;
  My lady screams, "Ah, bête!"
And Lady Thrifty scolds in French,
  And Cis in Billingsgate;
'Till both their lords my Second try,
  To end connubial strife;
Sir Thrifty has the means to die,
  And Raph—to beat his wife!

VI.

Uncouth was I of face and form,
  But strong to blast and blight
By pestilence and thunder-storm,
  By famine and by fight.
I pierced the rivets of the mail;
  I maimed the war-steed's hoof;
I bade the yellow harvest fail,
And sent the blast to rend the sail,
  And the bolt to rend the roof.

Within my Second's dark recess,
  In silent pomp I dwelt;
Before the mouth, in lowliness,
  My rude adorers knelt.
'Twas a fearful place: a pile of stones
  Stood for its stately door;
Its music was of sighs and groans;
And the torch-light fell on human bones
  Unburied on the floor!

The chieftain, ere his band he led,
  Came thither with his prayer;
The boatman, ere his sail he spread,
  Watched for an omen there;
And ever the shriek rang loud within,
  And ever the red blood ran;
And amid the sin and smoke and din,
I sate with a changeless, endless grin,
  Forging my First for man!

My priests are rotting in the grave;
  My shrine is silent now;
There is no victim in my cave,
  No crown upon my brow;
Nothing is left but dust and clay
  Of all that was divine;
My name and my memory pass away;
But dawn and dusk of one week-day
  Are called by mortals mine.

VII.

Oh yes! her childhood hath been nurst
In all the follies of my First;
And why doth she turn from the glittering throng,
From the courtier's jest, and the minstrel's song?

Why doth she look where the ripples play
Around my Second in yon fair bay,
While the boat in the twilight nears the shore,
With her speechless crew, and her muffled oar?

Hath she not heard in her lonely bower
My Whole's fond tale of magic power?
Softer and sweeter that music flows
Than the bulbul's hymn to the midnight rose.

VIII.

He talked of daggers and of darts,
  Of passions and of pains,
Of weeping eyes and wounded hearts,
  Of kisses and of chains;
He said, though love was kin to grief,
  He was not born to grieve;
He said, though many rued belief,
  She safely might believe:
But still the lady shook her head,
  And swore, by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
  And all that he could say.

He said my First—whose silent car
  Was slowly wandering by,
Veiled in a vapor, faint and far,
  Through the unfathomed sky—
Was like the smile whose rosy light
  Across her young lips passed;
Yet, oh! it was not half so bright,
  It changed not half so fast:
But still the lady shook her head,
  And swore, by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
  And all that he could say.

And then he set a cypress wreath
  Upon his raven hair,
And drew his rapier from its sheath,
  Which made the lady stare,
And said his life-blood's purple flow
  My Second there should dim,
If she, beloved and worshipped so,
  Would only weep for him:
But still the lady shook her head,
  And swore, by yea and nay,
My Whole was all that he had said,
  And all that he could say.

IX.

Come from my First—ay, come!
  The battle dawn is nigh;
And the screaming trump and the thundering drum
  Are calling thee to die!
Fight as thy father fought;
  Fall as thy father fell;
Thy task is taught, thy shroud is wrought;
  So—forward! and farewell!

Toll ye, my Second, toll!
  Fling high the flambeau's light;
And sing the hymn for a parted soul,
  Beneath the silent night!
The helm upon his head,
  The cross upon his breast;
Let the prayer be said, and the tear be shed:
  Now take him to his rest!

Digitized by Google

Call ye my Whole—go, call
The lord of lute and lay,
And let him greet the sable pall
With a noble song to-day.
Go, call him by his name:
No fitter hand may crave
To light the flame of a soldier's fame,
On the turf of a soldier's grave!

X.

Sir Hilary charged at Agincourt—
Sooth 'twas an awful day!
And though in that old age of sport,
The ruffiers of the camp and court
Had little time to pray,
'Tis said Sir Hilary muttered there
Two syllables by way of prayer.

My First to all the brave and proud
Who see to-morrow's sun;
My Next, with her cold and quiet cloud,
To those who find their dewy shroud
Before to-day's be done;
And both together to all blue eyes
That weep when a warrior nobly dies.

XI.

There kneels in holy St. Cuthbert's aisles
No holier father than Father Giles:
Matins or vespers, it matters not which,
He is ever there, like a saint in his niche;
Morning and midnight his missal he reads,
Midnight and morning he tells his beads.

Wide-spread the fame of the holy man;
Powerful his blessing, and potent his ban!
Wondrous the marvels his piety works
On miscreant heathens and infidel Turks!
But strangest of all is the power he is given
To turn maidens' hearts to the service of Heaven!

St. Ursula's prioress comes to-day
At holy St. Cuthbert's shrine to pray:
She comes with an offering—comes with a prayer—
For she leads to the altar the Lady Clare.
Mary, mother! how fair a maid
To leave the world for a cloister's shade!

She yields to-morrow her golden lands
For the Church's use, the Church's hands:
She quits the world with its pleasures and wiles,
And to-day she confesses to Father Giles:
Slight is the penance, I ween, may atone
For all of sin she hath ever known!

"Daughter, since last thou hast kneeled for grace
Hath peace in thy heart found a dwelling-place?
From thy heart hast thou banished each worldly thought?
Save the spirit's weal, hast thou pined for naught?"
Moist in her kerchief, and drooped her head;
But "my First," is all poor Clara said.

"Daughter! thy cheek hath grown pale and thin:
Is thy spirit chastened and pure within?
Gone from thy glance is its ancient mirth:
Are thy sighs for heaven, or thy tears for earth?"
For earth are her sighs, yet poor Clara knows
"My Second" no more than the spring's first rose.

Why doth he tremble—that holy man—
At eye so sunk, and at cheek so wan?
Less bitter the tears, less burning the sighs,
Heaven asks from her willing votaries;
Alas! when "my all" weeps as Clara weeps,
Holy Church gaineth more than she keeps!
St. Ursula's altar was dressed that day;
The maiden was there, but the monk was away.
St. Ursula's altar was lighted that night;
There were murmurs of sacrilege—whispers of flight;
And legends tell us that Father Giles
Was never seen more in St. Cuthbert's aisles!

XII.

My First's an airy thing,
Joying in its flowers;
Evermore wandering
In Fancy's bowers;
Living on beauteous smiles
From eyes that glisten,
And telling of Love's wiles
To ears that listen.

But if, in its first flush
Of warm emotion,
My Second come to crush
Its young devotion,
Oh! then it wastes away,
Weeping and waking,
And, on some sunny day,
Is blest in breaking.

XIII.

My First came forth in booted state,
For far Valencia bound,
And smiled to feel my Second's weight,
And hear its creaking sound.

"And here's a jailer sweet," quoth he,
"You cannot bribe or cozen:
To keep one ward in custody,
Wise men will forge a dozen."

But daybreak saw a lady ride
My Whole across the plain,
With a handsome cavalier beside
To hold her bridle-rein.

And "Blessing on the bonds," quoth he,
"Which wrinkled age imposes:
If woman must your prisoner be,
Your chain should be of roses."

Answers.—I. Heart-free.—II. Firefly.—III. Death-Watch.—IV. Moonlight.—V. Bell-Rope.—VI. Woden.—VII. Courtship.—VIII. Moonshine.—IX. Campbell.—X. Good-Night.—XI. Novice.—XII. Heart-ache.—XIII. Donkey.

Digitized by Google

BIBLIOTHEQUE

Digitized by Google

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon was born in Old Brompton, one of the suburbs of London, in 1802. She is said to have written rhymes at the age of thirteen, and at the age of eighteen she published in the *Literary Gazette* several short poems under the signature of "L. E. L." These attracted some attention, and she became a regular contributor of both prose and poetry. Her father died poor when she was a child, and as soon as she could earn money by writing she became the chief support of the destitute family. Her first volume, "The Fate of Adelaide, and Other Poems," was published in 1821. "The Improvisatrice," which is generally considered her best, appeared in 1824. Four or five other volumes of verse succeeded these within a dozen years, and she also published four novels.

Miss Landon's poetry all lies within that zone of romance through which we pass at about the age of eighteen. It is pure, fanciful, melodious, and true to life as life appears at that age. It is one of those things in literature which it is pleasant to have read, but which we are certain to outgrow.

In June, 1838, Miss Landon was married to George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle, in West Africa, and soon after sailed with him for that place. On October 15th, of the same year, she was found dead on the floor of her chamber. Investigation showed that she had died from an overdose of prussic acid, which she had been accustomed to take medicinally in small quantities. There was no good reason to consider her death as other than accidental. A volume of posthumous poems was published in 1839, and in 1841 Laman Blanchard edited the "Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L."

THE AWAKENING OF ENDYMION.

Lone upon a mountain, the pine-trees wailing round him,
Lone upon a mountain the Grecian youth is laid;
Sleep, mystic sleep, for many a year has bound him,
Yet his beauty, like a statue's, pale and fair, is undecayed.
When will he awaken?

When will he awaken? a loud voice hath been crying,
Night after night, and the cry has been in vain;
Winds, woods, and waves found echoes for replying,
But the tones of the beloved one were never heard again.
When will he awaken?
Asked the midnight's silver queen.

Never mortal eye has looked upon his sleeping;
Parents, kindred, comrades, have mourned for him as dead;
By day the gathered clouds have had him in their keeping,
And at night the solemn shadows round his rest are shed.
When will he awaken?

Long has been the cry of faithful love's imploring;
Long has hope been watching with soft eyes fixed above;
When will the fates, the life of life restoring,
Own themselves vanquished by much-enduring love?
When will he awaken?
Asks the midnight's weary queen.

Beautiful the sleep that she has watched untiring,
Lighted up with visions from yonder radiant sky,
Full of an immortal's glorious inspiring,
Softened by the woman's meek and loving sigh.
When will he awaken?

He has been dreaming of old heroic stories,
And the poet's passionate world has entered in his soul;
He has grown conscious of life's ancestral glories,
When sages and when kings first upheld the mind's control.
When will he awaken?
Asks the midnight's stately queen.

Lo, the appointed midnight! the present hour is fated!
It is Endymion's planet that rises on the air;

Digitized by Google

How long, how tenderly his goddess-love has waited,
Waited with a love too mighty for despair!
Soon he will awaken.

Soft amid the pines is a sound as if of singing,
Tones that seem the lute's from the breathing flowers depart;
Not a wind that wanders o'er Mount Latmos but is bringing
Music that is murmured from Nature's inmost heart.
Soon he will awaken
To his and midnight's queen!

Lovely is the green Earth—she knows the hour is holy;
Starry are the heavens, lit with eternal joy;
Light like their own is dawning sweet and slowly
O'er the fair and sculptured forehead of that yet dreaming boy.
Soon he will awaken!

Red as the red rose toward the morning turning,
Warms the youth's lip to the watcher's near his own;
While the dark eyes open, bright, intense, and burning
With a life more glorious than, ere they closed, was known.
Yes, he has awakened
For the midnight's happy queen!

What is this old history, but a lesson given,
How true love still conquers by the deep strength of truth—
How all the impulses, whose native home is heaven,
Sanctify the visions of hope, and faith, and youth?
'Tis for such they waken!

When every worldly thought is utterly forsaken,
Comes the starry midnight, felt by life's gifted few;
Then will the spirit from its earthly sleep awaken
To a being more intense, more spiritual, and true.
So doth the soul awaken,
Like that youth to night's fair queen!

NIGHT AT SEA.

The lovely purple of the moon's bestowing
Has vanished from the waters, where it flung
A royal color, such as gems are throwing
Tyrian of regal garniture among.
'Tis night, and overhead the sky is gleaming,
Through the slight vapor trembles each dim star;
I turn away—my heart is sadly dreaming
Of scenes they do not light, of scenes afar.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

By each dark wave around the vessel sweeping,
Farther am I from old dear friends removed;
Till the lone vigil that I now am keeping,
I did not know how much you were beloved.
How many acts of kindness little heeded,
Kind looks, kind words, rise half reproachful now!
Hurried and anxious, my vexèd life has speeded,
And memory wears a soft accusing brow.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

The very stars are strangers, as I catch them
Athwart the shadowy sails that swell above;
I cannot hope that other eyes will watch them
At the same moment with a mutual love.
They shine not there, as here they now are shining;
The very hours are changed.—Ah, do ye sleep?
O'er each home pillow midnight is declining—
May some kind dream at least my image keep!
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

Yesterday has a charm, To-day could never
Fling o'er the mind, which knows not till it parts
How it turns back with tenderest endeavor
To fix the past within the heart of hearts.
Absence is full of memory; it teaches
The value of all old familiar things;
The strengthener of affection, while it reaches
O'er the dark parting, with an angel's wings.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

The world, with one vast element omitted—
Man's own especial element, the earth;
Yet, o'er the waters is his rule transmitted
By that great knowledge whence has power its birth.
How oft on some strange loveliness while gazing
Have I wished for you—beautiful as new,
The purple waves like some wild army raising
Their snowy banners as the ship cuts through.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you!

Bearing upon its wings the hues of morning,
Up springs the flying fish like life's false joy,
Which of the sunshine asks that frail adorning
Whose very light is fated to destroy.
Ah, so doth genius on its rainbow pinion
Spring from the depths of an unkindly world;
So spring sweet fancies from the heart's dominion—
Too soon in death the scorched-up wing is furled.
My friends, my absent friends!
Whate'er I see is linked with thoughts of you.

No life is in the air, but in the waters
Are creatures, huge, and terrible, and strong;
The sword-fish and the shark pursue their slaughters,
War universal reigns these depths along.

Digitized by Google

Like some new island on the ocean springing,
Floats on the surface some gigantic whale,
From its vast head a silver fountain flinging,
Bright as the fountain in a fairy tale.
My friends, my absent friends!
I read such fairy legends while with you.

Light is amid the gloomy canvas spreading,
The moon is whitening the dusky sails,
From the thick bank of clouds she masters, shedding
The softest influence that o'er night prevails.
Pale is she like a young queen pale with splendor,
Haunted with passionate thoughts too fond, too deep;
The very glory that she wears is tender,
The eyes that watch her beauty fain would weep.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, as I think of you?

Sunshine is ever cheerful, when the morning
Wakens the world with cloud-dispelling eyes;
The spirits mount to glad endeavor, scorning
What toil upon a path so sunny lies.
Sunshine and hope are comrades, and their weather
Calls into life an energy like Spring's;
But memory and moonlight go together,
Reflected in the light that either brings.
My friends, my absent friends!
Do you think of me, then? I think of you.

The busy deck is hushed, no sounds are waking
But the watch pacing silently and slow;
The waves against the sides incessant breaking,
And rope and canvas swaying to and fro.
The topmast sail, it seems like some dim pinnacle
Cresting a shadowy tower amid the air;
While red and fitful gleams come from the binnacle.
The only light on board to guide us—where?
My friends, my absent friends!
Far from my native land, and far from you.

On one side of the ship, the moonbeam's shimmer
In luminous vibrations sweeps the sea,
But where the shadow falls, a strange, pale glimmer
Seems, glow-worm-like, amid the waves to be.
All that the spirit thinks of thought and feeling,
Takes visionary hues from such an hour;
But while some phantasy is o'er me stealing,
I start—remembrance has a keener power:
My friends, my absent friends!
From the fair dream I start to think of you.

A dusk line in the moonlight—I discover
What all day long vainly I sought to catch;
Or is it but the varying clouds that hover
Thick in the air, to mock the eyes that watch?
No; well the sailor knows each speck, appearing,
Upon the tossing waves, the far-off strand;
To that dark line our eager ship is steering.
Her voyage done—to-morrow we shall land.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

Come back, come back together,
All ye fancies of the past,
Ye days of April weather,
Ye shadows that are cast
By the haunted hours before!
Come back, come back, my childhood;
Thou art summoned by a spell
From the green leaves of the wildwood,
From beside the charmèd well,
For Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore!

The fields were covered over
With colors as she went;
Daisy, buttercup, and clover,
Below her footsteps bent;
Summer shed its shining store;
She was happy as she pressed them
Beneath her little feet;
She plucked them and caressed them;
They were so very sweet,
They had never seemed so sweet before,
To Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

How the heart of childhood dances
Upon a sunny day!
It has its own romances,
And a wide, wide world have they!
A world where Phantasie is king,
Made all of eager dreaming:
When once grown up and tall—
Now is the time for scheming—
Then we shall do them all!
Do such pleasant fancies spring
For Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore?

She seems like an ideal love,
The poetry of childhood shown,
And yet loved with a real love,
As if she were our own—
A younger sister for the heart;
Like the woodland pheasant,
Her hair is brown and bright;
And her smile is pleasant,
With its rosy light.
Never can the memory part
With Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

Did the painter, dreaming
In a morning hour,
Catch the fairy seeming
Of this fairy flower?
Winning it with eager eyes
From the old enchanted stories,
Lingering with a long delight
On the unforgotten glories
Of the infant sight?
Giving us a sweet surprise
In Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore?

Too long in the meadow staying,
Where the cowslip bends,

Digitized by Google

With the buttercups delaying
As with early friends,
Did the little maiden stay.
Sorrowful the tale for us;
We, too, loiter 'mid life's flowers,
A little while so glorious,
So soon lost in darker hours.
All love lingering on their way,
Like Red Riding Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

THE SHEPHERD BOY.

Like some vision olden
Of far other time,
When the age was golden,
In the young world's prime,
Is thy soft pipe ringing,
O lonely shepherd boy:
What song art thou singing,
In thy youth and joy?

Or art thou complaining
Of thy lowly lot,
And thine own disdaining,
Dost ask what thou has not?
Of the future dreaming,
Weary of the past,
For the present scheming—
All but what thou hast.

No, thou art delighting
In thy summer home;
Where the flowers inviting
Tempt the bee to roam;
Where the cowslip, bending
With its golden bells,
Of each glad hour's ending
With a sweet chime tells.

All wild creatures love him
When he is alone;
Every bird above him
Sings its softest tone.
Thankful to high Heaven,
Humble in thy joy,
Much to thee is given,
Lowly shepherd boy.

WHEN SHOULD LOVERS BREATHE THEIR VOWS?

When should lovers breathe their vows?
When should ladies hear them?
When the dew is on the boughs,
When none else are near them;
When the moon shines cold and pale,
When the birds are sleeping,
When no voice is on the gale,
When the rose is weeping;
When the stars are bright on high,
Like hopes in young Love's dreaming,
And glancing round the light clouds fly,
Like soft fears to shade their beaming.
The fairest smiles are those that live
On the brow by starlight wreathing;
And the lips their richest incense give
When the sigh is at midnight breathing.
Oh, softest is the cheek's love-ray
When seen by moonlight hours;
Other roses seek the day,
But blushes are night flowers.
Oh, when the moon and stars are bright,
When the dew-drops glisten,
Then their vows should lovers plight,
Then should ladies listen!

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

"A fair young face—yet mournful in its youth—
Brooding above sad thoughts."

It is the last token of love and of thee!
Thy once faith is broken, thou false one to me.
I think on the letters with which I must part;
Too dear are the fetters which wind round my heart.

Thy words were enchanted—and ruled me at will;
My spirit is haunted, remembering them still.
So earnest, so tender—the full heart was there;
Ah! song might surrender its lute in despair.

I deemed that I knew thee as none ever knew;
That 'twas mine to subdue thee, and thine to be true.
I deemed to my keeping thy memory had brought
The depths that were sleeping of innermost thought.

The bitter concealings life's treacheries teach,
The long-subdued feelings the world cannot reach—
Thy mask to the many was worn not for me;
I saw thee—can any seem like unto thee?

No other can know thee as I, love, have known,
No future will show thee a love like mine own.
That love was no passion that walketh by day,
A fancy— a fashion that flitteth away.

'Twas life's whole emotion — a storm in its might—
'Twas deep as the ocean, and silent as night.
It swept down life's flowers, the fragile and fair,
The heart had no powers from passion to spare.

Thy faults butendeared thee, so stormy and wild.
My lover! I feared thee as feareth a child.
They seemed but the shrouding of spirit too high,
As vapors come crowding the sunniest sky.

I worshipped in terror a comet above:
Ah! fatal the error—ah! fatal the love!
For thy sake life never will charm me again;
Its beauty forever is vanished and vain.

Thou canst not restore me the depth and the truth
Of the hopes that came o'er me in earliest youth,
Their gloss is departed—their magic is flown,
And sad and faint-hearted I wander alone.

Digitized by Google

'Tis vain to regret me—you will not regret;
You will try to forget me—you cannot forget.
We shall hear of each other—O! misery to hear
Those names from another that once were so dear!

What slight words will sting us that breathe of the past,
And slight things will bring us thoughts fated to last?
The fond hopes that centred in thee are all dead,
But the iron has entered the soul where they fed.

Like others in seeming, we'll walk through life's part,
Cold, careless, and dreaming—with death in the heart—
No hope—no repentance; the spring of life o'er;
All died with that sentence—I love thee no more!

CAN YOU FORGET ME?

Can you forget me?—I who have so cherished
The veriest trifle that was memory's link;
The roses that you gave me, although perished,
Were precious in my sight; they made me think
You took them in their scentless beauty stooping
From the warm shelter of the garden wall;
Autumn, while into languid winter drooping,
Gave its last blossoms, opening but to fall.
Can you forget them?

Can you forget me? I am not relying
On plighted vows—alas! I know their worth;
Man's faith to woman is a trifle, dying
Upon the very breath that gave it birth.
But I remember hours of quiet gladness,
When, if the heart had truth, it spoke it then,
When thoughts would sometimes take a tone of sadness,
And then unconsciously grow glad again.
Can you forget them?

Can you forget me? My whole soul was blended—
At least it sought to blend itself with thine;
My life's whole purpose, winning thee, seemed ended;
Thou wert my heart's sweet home—my spirit's shrine.
Can you forget me?—when the firelight, burning,
Flung sudden gleams around the quiet room,
How would thy words, to long past moments turning,
Trust me with thoughts soft as the shadowy gloom!
Can you forget them?

There is no truth in love, whate'er its seeming,
And heaven itself could scarcely seem more true—
Sadly have I awakened from the dreaming,
Whose charmèd slumber—false one!—was of you.
I gave mine inmost being to thy keeping—
I had no thought I did not seek to share;
Feelings that hushed within my soul were sleeping,
Waked into voice, to trust them to thy care.
Can you forget them?

Can you forget me? This is vainly tasking
The faithless heart where I, alas! am not.
Too well I know the idleness of asking—
The misery—of why am I forgot?
The happy hours that I have passed while kneeling,
Half slave, half child, to gaze upon thy face.—
But what to thee this passionate appealing—
Let my heart break—it is a common case.
You have forgotten me.

DISENCHANTMENT.

Do not ask me why I loved him,
Love's cause is to love unknown;
Faithless as the past has proved him,
Once his heart appeared mine own.
Do not say he did not merit
All my fondness, all my truth;
Those in whom love dwells inherit
Every dream that haunted youth.

He might not be all I dreamed him,
Noble, generous, gifted, true;
Not the less I fondly deemed him
All those flattering visions drew.
All the hues of old romances
By his actual self grew dim;
Bitterly I mock the fancies
That once found their life in him.

From the hour by him enchanted,
From the moment when we met,
Henceforth with one image haunted,
Life may never more forget.
All my nature changed—his being
Seemed the only source of mine.
Fond heart, hadst thou no foreseeing
Thy sad future to divine?

Once, upon myself relying,
All I asked were words and thought;
Many hearts, to mine replying,
Owned the music that I brought.
Eager, spiritual, and lonely,
Visions filled the fairy hour,
Deep with love—though love was only
Not a presence, but a power.

But from that first hour I met thee,
All caught actual life from you.
Alas! how can I forget thee,
Thou who mad'st the fancied true?
Once my wide world was ideal,
Fair it was—ah! very fair;
Wherefore hast thou made it real?
Wherefore is thy image there?

Ah! no more to me is given
Fancy's far and fairy birth;
Chords upon my lute are riven,
Never more to sound on earth.
Once, sweet music could it borrow

Digitized by Google

From a look, a word, a tone;
I could paint another's sorrow—
Now I think but of mine own.

Life's dark waves have lost the glitter
Which at morning-tide they wore,
And the well within is bitter;
Naught its sweetness may restore:
For I know how vainly given
Life's most precious things may be,
Love that might have looked on heaven,
Even as it looked on thee.

Ah, farewell!—with that word dying,
Hope and love must perish too:
For thy sake themselves denying,
What is truth with thee untrue?
Farewell!—'tis a dreary sentence,
Like the death-doom of the grave,
May it wake in thee repentance,
Stinging when too late to save!

THE WOODLAND BROOK.

Thou art flowing, thou art flowing,
O small and silvery brook;
The rushes by thee growing,
And with a patient look
The pale narcissus o'er thee bends
Like one who asks in vain for friends.

I bring not back my childhood,
Sweet comrade of its hours;
The music of the wild-wood,
The color of the flowers;
They do not bring again the dream
That haunted me beside thy stream.

When black-lettered old romances
Made a world for me alone;
O days of lovely fancies,
Are ye forever flown?
Ye are fled, sweet, vague, and vain,
So I cannot dream again.

I have left a feverish pillow
For thy soothing song;
Alas! each fairy billow
An image bears along;
Look where I will, I only see
One face too much beloved by me.

In vain my heart remembers
What pleasure used to be;
My past thoughts are but embers
Consumed by love for thee.
I wish to love thee less—and feel
A deeper fondness o'er me steal.

LAST VERSES OF L. E. L.

A star has left the kindling sky,
A lovely northern light;
How many planets are on high!
But that has left the night.

I miss its bright familiar face;
It was a friend to me,
Associate with my native place
And those beyond the sea.

It rose upon our English sky,
Shone o'er our English land,
And brought back many a loving eye
And many a gentle hand.

It seemed to answer to my thought;
It called the past to mind,
And with its welcome presence brought
All I had left behind.

The voyage it lights no longer ends
Soon on a foreign shore;
How can I but recall the friends
That I may see no more?

Fresh from the pain it was to part,
How could I bear the pain?
Yet strong the omen in my heart
That says, we meet again—

Meet with a deeper, dearer love;
For absence shows the worth
Of all from which we then remove—
Friends, home, and native earth.

Thou lovely polar star, mine eyes
Still turned the first on thee,
Till I have felt a sad surprise
That none looked up with me.

But thou hast sunk upon the wave,
Thy radiant place unknown;
I seem to stand beside a grave,
And stand by it alone.

Farewell! ah, would to me were given
A power upon thy light!
What words upon our English heaven
Thy loving rays should write!

Kind messages of love and hope
Upon thy rays should be;
Thy shining orbit should have scope
Scarcely enough for me.

Oh, fancy vain, as it is fond,
And little needed too!
My friends, I need not look beyond
My heart to look for you.

Digitized by Google

CHARLES SWAIN.

CHARLES SWAIN was born in Manchester in 1803. His father, an Englishman, died in 1809. His mother was a Parisian, and the boy was educated by her brother, who afterward introduced him into his business, that of dyeing. But in 1832 he went to learn the art of engraving with a firm in Manchester, of which he became a member a few years later. This business he followed during the remainder of his life. His leisure hours were largely given to poetry. His first writings were published in the Manchester *Iris*, edited by James Montgomery; and he soon became a frequent contributor to various periodicals. His first volume was "Metrical Essays," published in 1827, and it has been followed by five other volumes of poems, the last issued in 1863. A collected edition is published in Boston in one volume. Many of Swain's songs have been very popular, several of them have been translated into French and German, and his "Dryburgh Abbey" has violent admirers—more on Scott's account, probably, than on his own, for it is not remarkable as a poem. He died on September 22, 1874, at Manchester, in the pretty vine-covered cottage which had been his home for many years.

DRYBURGH ABBEY.

And Scott—that Ocean 'mid the stream of men!
That Alp, amidst all mental greatness reared!—

'TWAS morn—but not the ray which falls the summer boughs among,
When beauty walks in gladness forth, with all her light and song;
'Twas morn—but mist and cloud hung deep upon the lonely vale,
And shadows, like the wings of death, were out upon the gale.

For He whose spirit woke the dust of nations into life—
That o'er the waste and barren earth spread flowers and fruitage rife—
Whose genius, like the sun, illumed the mighty realms of mind—
Had fled forever from the fame, love, friendship of mankind!

To wear a wreath in glory wrought his spirit swept afar,
Beyond the soaring wing of thought, the light of moon or star;
To drink immortal waters, free from every taint of earth—
To breathe before the shrine of life, the source whence worlds had birth!

There was wailing on the early breeze, and darkness in the sky,
When, with sable plume, and cloak, and pall, a funeral train swept by;
Methought—St. Mary shield us well!—that other forms moved there
Than those of mortal brotherhood, the noble, young, and fair!

Was it a dream?—how oft, in sleep, we ask, "Can this be true?"
Whilst warm Imagination paints her marvels to our view;—
Earth's glory seems a tarnished crown to that which we behold,
When dreams enchant our sight with things whose meanest garb is gold!

Was it a dream?—methought "the dauntless Harold" passed me by—
The proud "Fitz-James," with martial step, and dark intrepid eye;
That "Marmion's" haughty crest was there, a mourner for his sake;
And she—the bold, the beautiful!—sweet "Lady of the Lake."

The "Minstrel" whose *last lay* was o'er, whose broken harp lay low,
And with him glorious "Waverley," with glance and step of woe;
And "Stuart's" voice rose there, as when, 'mid fate's disastrous war,
He led the wild, ambitious, proud, and brave "Vich Ian Vohr."

Next, marvelling at his sable suit, the "Dominie" stalked past,
With "Bertram," "Julia" by his side, whose tears were flowing fast;
"Guy Mannering," too, moved there, o'erpowered by that afflicting sight;
And "Merrilies," as when she wept on Ellangowan's height.

Solemn and grave, "Monkbarns" appeared, amidst that burial line;
And "Ochiltree" leaned o'er his staff, and mourned for "Auld lang syne!"

Digitized by Google

Slow marched the gallant "McIntyre," whilst
"Lovel" mused alone;
For *once* "Miss Wardour's" image left that
bosom's faithful throne.

With coronach, and arms reversed, forth came
"MacGregor's" clan—
Red "Dougal's" cry pealed shrill and wild—
"Rob Roy's" bold brow looked wan;
The fair "Diana" kissed her cross, and blessed
its sainted ray;
And "Wae is me!" the "Baillie" sighed, "that
I should see this day!"

Next rode, in melancholy guise, with sombre
vest and scarf,
Sir Edward, Laird of Ellieslaw, the far-renowned
"Black Dwarf;"
Upon his left, in bonnet blue, and white locks
flowing free—
The pious sculptor of the grave—stood "Old
Mortality!"

"Balfour of Burley," "Claverhouse," the "Lord
of Evendale,"
And stately "Lady Margaret," whose woe might
naught avail!
Fierce "Bothwell" on his charger black, as
from the conflict won;
And pale "Habakkuk Mucklewrath," who cried
"God's will be done!"

And like a rose, a young white rose, that blooms
'mid wildest scenes,
Passed she—the modest, eloquent, and virtuous
"Jeanie Deans;"
And "Dumbeidikes," that silent laird, with love
too *deep* to *smile*,
And "Effie," with her noble friend, the good
"Duke of Argyle."

With lofty brow, and bearing high, dark "Ravenswood" advanced,
Who on the false "Lord Keeper's" mien with
eye indignant glanced:—
Whilst graceful as a lonely fawn, 'neath covert
close and sure,
Approached the beauty of all hearts—the "Bride
of Lammermoor!"

Then "Annot Lyle," the fairy queen of light and
song, stepped near,
The "Knight of Ardenvohr," and *he*, the gifted
Hieland Seer;
"Dalgetty," "Duncan," "Lord Monteith," and
"Ranald," met my view;
The hapless "Children of the Mist," and bold
"Mhich-connel Dhu!"

On swept "Bois-Guilbert"—"Front de Bœuf"—
"De Bracy's" plume of woe;
And "Cœur de Lion's" crest shone near the
valient "Ivanhoe;"
While soft as glides a summer cloud "Rowena"
closer drew,
With beautiful "Rebecca," peerless daughter
of the Jew!

Still onward like the gathering night advanced
that funeral train—
Like billows when the tempest sweeps across
the shadowy main;
Where'er the eager gaze might reach, in noble
ranks were seen
Dark plume, and glittering mail and crest, and
woman's beauteous mien!

A sound thrilled through that length'ning host!
methought the vault was closed,
Where, in his glory and renown, fair Scotia's
bard reposed!
A sound thrilled through that length'ning host!
and forth my vision fled!
But, ah!—that mournful dream proved true—the
immortal Scott was dead!

The vision and the voice are o'er! their influence waned away
Like music o'er a summer lake at the golden
close of day:
The vision and the voice are o'er!—but when
will be forgot
The buried Genius of Romance—the imperishable Scott?

THE THREE CALLERS.

Morn calleth fondly to a fair boy straying
'Mid golden meadows, rich with clover dew;
She calls, but he still thinks of naught save playing,
And so she smiles and waves him an adieu!
Whilst he, still merry with his flowery store,
Deems not that Morn, sweet Morn, returns no
more.

Noon cometh—but the boy to manhood growing,
Heeds not the time. He sees but one sweet
form,
One young, fair face from the bower of jasmine
glowing,
And all his loving heart with bliss is warm;
So Noon, unnoticed, seeks the western shore,
And man forgets that Noon returns no more.

Night tappeth gently at a casement gleaming
With the thin firelight, flickering faint and
low,
By which a gray-haired man is sadly dreaming
O'er pleasures gone, as all life's pleasures go.
Night calls him to her—and he leaves his door
Silent and dark—and he returns no more.

A VIOLET IN HER HAIR.

A violet in her lovely hair,
A rose upon her bosom fair!
But oh, her eyes
A lovelier violet disclose,
And her ripe lips the sweetest rose
That's 'neath the skies.

A lute beneath her graceful hand
Breathes music forth at her command;

Digitized by Google

But still her tongue
Far richer music calls to birth
Than all the minstrel power on earth
Can give to song.

And thus she moves in tender light,
The purest ray, where all is bright,
Serene and sweet;
And sheds a graceful influence round,
That hallows e'en the very ground
Beneath her feet!

SMILE, AND NEVER HEED ME.

Though, when other maids stand by,
I may deign thee no reply,
Turn not then away, and sigh—
Smile, and never heed me!
If our love, indeed, be such
As must thrill at every touch,
Why should others learn as much?—
Smile, and never heed me!

Where's the use that *they* should know
If one's heart beat fast or slow?—
Deepest love avoideth show—
Smile, and never heed me.
Let our hearts, like stars of night,
Shunning day's intrusive light,
Live but for each other's sight—
Smile, and never heed me.

Even if, with maiden pride,
I should bid thee quit my side,
Take this lesson for thy guide—
Smile, and never heed me!
But when stars and twilight meet,
And the dew is falling sweet,
And thou hear'st my coming feet—
Then—thou then—mayst heed me!

I WAITED TILL THE TWILIGHT.

I waited till the twilight,
And yet he did not come;
I strayed along the brook-side,
And slowly wandered home;
When who should come behind me,
But him I would have chid?
He said he came to find me—
Do you really think he did?

He said, since last we parted,
He'd thought of naught as sweet
As of this very moment—
The moment we should meet.
He showed me where, half shaded,
A cottage-home lay hid;
He said for me he made it—
Do you really think he did?

He said when first he saw me
Life seemed at once divine;
Each night he dreamed of angels,
And every face was mine:
Sometimes a voice, in sleeping,
Would all his hopes forbid;
And then he wakened, weeping—
Do you really think he did?

THE OLD COTTAGE CLOCK.

Oh! the old, old clock of the household stock
Was the brightest thing and neatest;
Its hands, though old, had a touch of gold,
And its chime rang still the sweetest.
'Twas a monitor, too, though its words were few,
Yet they lived, though nations altered;
And its voice, still strong, warned old and young,
When the voice of friendship faltered!
Tick, tick, it said—quick, quick, to bed—
For ten I've given warning;
Up, up, and go, or else, you know,
You'll never rise *soon* in the morning!

A friendly voice was that old, old clock,
As it stood in the corner smiling,
And blessed the time with a merry chime,
The wintry hours beguiling;
But a cross old voice was that tiresome clock,
As it called at daybreak boldly,
When the down looked gray o'er the misty way,
And the early air blew coldly;
Tick, tick, it said—quick, out of bed—
For five I've given warning;
You'll never have health, you'll never get wealth,
Unless you're up soon in the morning.

Still hourly the sound goes round and round,
With a tone that ceases never;
While tears are shed for the bright days fled,
And the old friends lost forever!
Its heart beats on—though hearts are gone
That warmer beat and younger;
Its hands still move—though hands we love
Are clasped on earth no longer!
Tick, tick, it said—to the churchyard bed,
The grave hath given warning—
Up, up, and rise, and look to the skies,
And prepare for a heavenly morning!

LIFE.

Life's not our own—'tis but a loan—
To be repaid;
Soon the dark Comer's at the door,
The debt is due—the dream is o'er—
Life's but a shade.

Thus all decline—that bloom or shine—
Both star and flower;
'Tis but a little odor shed—
A light gone out—a spirit fled—
A funeral hour!

Then let us show a tranquil brow,
Whate'er befalls;
That we upon life's latest brink
May look on Death's dark face—and think
An angel calls!

Digitized by Google

GERALD GRIFFIN.

GERALD GRIFFIN was born in Limerick, December 12, 1803. In 1820 his parents emigrated to the United States, and he went to live with an elder brother at Adare. He had published occasional poems in the Limerick newspapers, and at the age of eighteen wrote a tragedy entitled "Aguire." With this in his pocket, he went to London in 1823, determined to devote himself to literature. He found no market for his tragedy; and another which he wrote, entitled "Gisippus," was equally unfortunate, until after his death it was brought out with great success at Drury Lane. Griffin was compelled to work for the newspapers and periodicals, and scon became known as a brilliant magazinist. He published "Holland Tide" and "Tales of the Munster Festivals" in 1827, and in 1828 "The Colleen Bawn, or the Collegians," the most celebrated of his novels, which has been dramatized by Boucicault. Among his other works are "The Rivals," "The Duke of Monmouth," and "Tales of the Jury-Room." In 1838 he entered the society of Christian Brothers at Cork, where he died of a fever on June 12, 1840. His complete works in ten volumes (of which the poems and tragedy of "Gisippus" form one volume), with a life by his brother, were published in New York.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

THE stream that hurries by your fixèd shore
Returns no more.
The wind that dries at morn yon dewy lawn
Breathes and is gone.
Those withered flowers to summer's ripening glow
No more shall blow.
Those fallen leaves that strew yon garden-bed
For aye are dead.
On shore, or sea, or hill, or vale, or plain,
Naught shall remain.
Vainly for sunshine fled and joys gone by
We heave a sigh;
On, ever on, with unexhausted breath,
Time hastes to death;
Even with each word we speak a moment flies,
Is born and dies.
Of all for which poor mortals vainly mourn,
Naught shall return.
Life hath its home in heaven and earth beneath,
And so hath death.
Not all the chains that clank in Eastern clime
Can fetter time.
For all the phials in the doctor's store,
Youth comes no more.
No drugs on age's wrinkled cheek renew
Life's early dew.
Not all the tears by pious mourners shed
Can wake the dead.

If thus through lesser Nature's empire wide
Nothing abide,
If wind and wave and leaf and sun and flower
Have all their hour,
He walks on ice whose dallying spirit clings
To earthly things,
And he alone is wise whose well-taught love
Is fixed above:
Truths firm and bright, but oft to mortal ear
Chilling and drear;
Harsh as the raven's croak, the sounds that tell
Of pleasure's knell.
Pray, reader, that the humble minstrel's strain
Not all be vain;
But when thou bend'st to God the suppliant knee,
Remember me.

THE MIE-NA-MALLAH* NOW IS PAST.

I.

THE mie-na-mallah now is past,
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!
And I must leave my home at last,
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!
I look into my father's eyes,
I hear my mother's parting sighs—
Ah! fool to pine for other ties—
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!

II.

This evening they must sit alone,
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!
They'll talk of me when I am gone,
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!
Who now will cheer my weary sire,
When toil and care his heart shall tire;
My chair is empty by the fire;
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!

III.

How sunny looks my pleasant home,
O wirra sthru! O wirra-sthru!

* Honeymoon.

Digitized by Google

Those flowers for me shall never bloom—
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru;
I seek new friends, and I am told
That they are rich in lands and gold;
Ah! will they love me like the old?
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru?

IV.

Farewell, dear friends, we meet no more—
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru;
My husband's horse is at the door;
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru;
Ah, love! ah, love! be kind to me;
For by this breaking heart you see,
How dearly I have purchased thee!
O wirra-sthru! O wirra-sthru!

OLD TIMES! OLD TIMES!

Old times! old times! the gay old times!
When I was young and free,
And heard the merry Easter chimes
Under the sally-tree.
My Sunday palm beside me placed—
My cross upon my hand—
A heart at rest within my breast,
And sunshine on the land!

It is not that my fortunes flee,
Nor that my cheek is pale—
I mourn whene'er I think of thee,
My darling native vale!—
A wiser head I have, I know,
Than when I loitered there—
But in my wisdom there is woe,
And in my knowledge, care.

I've lived to know my share of joy,
To feel my share of pain—
To learn that friendship's self can cloy,
To love and love in vain—
To feel a pang and wear a smile,
To tire of other climes—
To like my own unhappy isle,
And sing the gay old times!

And sure the land is nothing changed,
The birds are singing still;
The flowers are springing where we ranged,
There's sunshine on the hill!
The sally, waving o'er my head,
Still sweetly shades my frame—
But ah, those happy days are fled,
And I am not the same!

Oh, come again, ye merry times!
Sweet, sunny, fresh and calm—
And let me hear those Easter chimes,
And wear my Sunday palm.
If I could cry away mine eyes,
My tears would flow in vain—
If I could waste my heart in sighs,
They'll never come again!

A PLACE IN THY MEMORY, DEAREST.

A place in thy memory, dearest,
Is all that I claim,
To pause and look back when thou hearest
The sound of my name.
Another may woo thee, nearer,
Another may win and wear;
I care not though he be dearer,
If I am remembered there.

Remember me—not as a lover
Whose hope was crossed,
Whose bosom can never recover
The light it hath lost,
As the young bride remembers the mother
She loves though she never may see,
As a sister remembers a brother,
Oh, dearest! remember me.

Could I be thy true lover, dearest,
Couldst thou smile on me,
I would be the fondest and nearest
That ever loved thee!
But a cloud on my pathway is glooming
That never must burst upon thine;
And Heaven, that made thee all blooming,
Ne'er made thee to wither on mine.

Remember me then!—oh, remember!
My calm, light love;
Though bleak as the blasts of November
My life may prove,
That life will, though lonely, be sweet,
If its brightest enjoyment should be,
A smile and kind word when we meet,
And a place in thy memory.

GILLI-MA-CHREE.

Gilli-ma-chree,
Sit down by me,
We now are joined, and ne'er shall sever;
This hearth's our own,
Our hearts are one,
And peace is ours forever!

When I was poor,
Your father's door
Was closed against your constant lover;
With care and pain,
I tried in vain
My fortunes to recover.
I said, "To other lands I'll roam,
Where Fate may smile on me, love;"
I said, "Farewell, my own old home!"
And I said, "Farewell to thee, love!"
Sing *Gilli-ma-chree, etc.*

I might have said,
"My mountain-maid,
Come live with me, your own true lover;
I know a spot,
A silent cot,
Your friends can ne'er discover.
Where gently flows the waveless tide

Digitized by Google

By one small garden only;
Where the heron waves his wings so wide
And the linnet sings so lonely!"
Sing *Gilli-ma-chree, etc.*

I might have said,
"My mountain-maid,
A father's right was never given
True hearts to curse
With tyrant force
That have been blessed in heaven."
But then, I said, "In after years,
When thoughts of home shall find her!
My love may mourn with secret tears
Her friends, thus left behind her."
Sing *Gilli-ma-chree etc.*

"Oh, no," I said,
"My own dear maid,
For me, though all forlorn, forever,
That heart of thine
Shall ne'er repine
O'er slighted duty—never.
From home and thee though wandering far
A dreary fate be mine, love;
I'd rather live in endless war
Than buy my peace with thine, love!"
Sing *Gilli-ma-chree, etc.*

Far, far away,
By night and day,
I toiled to win a golden treasure;
And golden gains
Repaid my pains
In fair and shining measure.
I sought again my native land,
Thy father welcomed me, love;
I poured my gold into his hand,
And my guerdon found in thee, love!
Sing *Gilli-ma-chree,*
Sit down by me,
We now are joined, and ne'er shall sever;
This hearth's our own,
Our hearts are one,
And peace is ours forever.

THE PHANTOM CITY.

A story I heard on the cliffs of the west,
That oft through the breakers dividing,
A city is seen on the ocean's wild breast,
In turreted majesty riding.
But brief is the glimpse of that phantom so bright,
Soon close the white waters to screen it,
And the bodement they say, of the wonderful sight,
Is death to the eyes that have seen it.

I said when they told me the wonderful tale,
"My country, is this not thy story?
Thus oft through the breakers of discord we hail
A promise of peace and of glory."
Soon gulfed in those waters of hatred again,
No longer our fancy can find it,
And woe to our hearts for the vision so vain;
For ruin and death come behind it.

MY SPIRIT IS OF PENSIVE MOULD.

My spirit is of pensive mould,
I cannot laugh as once of old,
When sporting o'er some woodland scene,
A child I trod the dewy green.

I cannot sing my merry lay
As in that past unconscious day,
For time has laid existence bare,
And shown me sorrow lurking there.

I would I were the lonely breeze
That mourns among the leafless trees,
That I might sigh from morn till night
O'er vanished peace and lost delight.

I would I were the heavy shower
That falls in spring on leaf and bower,
That I might weep the live-long day
For erring man and hope's decay—

For all the woe beneath the sun,
For all the wrong to virtue done,
For every soul to falsehood gained,
For every heart by evil stained—

For man by man in durance held,
For early dreams of joy dispelled,
For all the hope the world awakes
In youthful hearts, and after breaks.

But still, though hate and fraud and strife
Have stained the shining web of life,
Sweet Hope the glowing woof renews,
In all its old enchanting hues.

Flow on, flow on, thou shining stream!
Beyond life's dark and changeful dream,
There is a hope, there is a joy,
This faithless world can ne'er destroy.

Sigh on, sigh on, ye gentle winds!
For stainless hearts and faithful minds,
There is a bliss abiding, true,
That shall not pass and die like you.

Shine on, shine on, thou glorious sun!
When Day his latest course has run,
On sinless hearts shall rise a light
That ne'er shall set in gloomy night.

THEY SPEAK OF SCOTLAND'S HEROES OLD.

They speak of Scotland's heroes old,
Struggling to make their country free,
And in that hour my heart grows cold,
For, Erin! then I think of thee!

They boast their Bruce of Bannockburn,
Their noble Knight of Ellerslie;
To Erin's sons I proudly turn,
My country, then I smile for thee.

They boast, though joined to England's power,
Scotland ne'er bowed to slavery!

Digitized by Google

An equal league in danger's hour,
My country, then I weep for thee.

And when they point to our fair Isle,
And say no patriot hearts have we—
That party stains the work defile,
My country—then I blush for thee.

But Hope says, "Blush or tear shall never
Sully approving Fame's decree."
When Freedom's word her bonds shall sever,
My country, then I'll joy in thee.

But oh! be Scotland honored long,
Be envy ever far from me,
My simple lay meant her no wrong,
My country—it was but for thee!

'TIS, IT IS THE SHANNON'S STREAM.

'Tis, it is the Shannon's stream
Brightly glancing, brightly glancing,
See, oh see the ruddy beam
Upon its waters dancing!
Thus returned from travel vain,
Years of exile, years of pain,
To see old Shannon's face again,
Oh, the bliss entrancing!
Hail, our own majestic stream,
Flowing ever, flowing ever,
Silent in the morning beam,
Our own beloved river!

Fling thy rocky portals wide,
Western ocean, western ocean;
Bend, ye hills, on either side,
In solemn, deep devotion;
While before the rising gales
On his heaving surface sails
Half the wealth of Erin's vales,
With undulating motion.
Hail, our own beloved stream,
Flowing ever, flowing ever,
Silent in the morning beam,
Our own majestic river!

On thy bosom deep and wide,
Noble river, lordly river,
Royal navies safe might ride,
Green Erin's lovely river!
Proud upon thy banks to dwell,
Let me ring Ambition's knell,
Lured by Hope's illusive spell
Again to wander, never.
Hail, our own romantic stream,
Flowing ever, flowing ever,
Silent in the morning beam,
Our own majestic river!

Let me, from thy placid course,
Gentle river, mighty river,
Draw such truth of silent force,
As sophist uttered never.
Thus, like thee, unchanging still,
With tranquil breast, and ordered will,
My Heaven-appointed course fulfil,
Undeviating ever!
Hail, our own majestic stream,
Flowing ever, flowing ever,
Silent in the morning beam,
Our own delightful river!

TIME AND ETERNITY.

For, stretch to life's extremest span
The brilliant course of earthly pleasure,
How looks the space assigned to man,
Lost in the vast eternal measure!

Rank, fortune, love, earth's highest bliss,
All life can yield, of sweet or splendid,
Are but a thing that scarcely is,
When lo! its mortal date is ended!

So swift is time, so briefly lost
The fleeting joys of life's creation,
What seems the present, is the past,
Before the mind can mark its station.

On earth we hold the spirit blest,
That learns to bear affliction cheerly;
And what we call, and fancy rest,
Is brief annihilation merely.

'Tis vain to say in youthful ears,
Time flees, earth fades, with all its pleasures;
The ardent heart attentive hears,
But naught of transient counsel treasures.

'Tis heavenly grace alone, my child,
The fruit of prayer attending duly,
Can firmly stem the tumult wild,
Of earthly passion rising newly.

Then shall we for so brief a world,
A speck in Nature's vast dominion,
With hope's high banner basely furled,
Return to earth with slothful pinion?

Forbid it truth, forbid it love,
The faithless thought untold should perish,
Forbid it all we hope above,
And all on earth we know and cherish!

YOU NEVER BADE ME HOPE.

I.

You never bade me hope, 'tis true
I asked you not to swear—
But I looked in those eyes of blue,
And read a promise there.

II.

The vow should bind with maiden sighs
That maiden's lips have spoken—
But that which looks from maiden's eyes
Should last of all be broken!

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM AND MARY HOWITT.

WILLIAM HOWITT was born in Heanor, Derbyshire, in 1795. MARY BOTHAM was born in Uttoxeter in 1804. They were members of the Society of Friends, and married in 1823. After a tour through Great Britain on foot, they devoted themselves to literature, and they have produced a large number of books, many of them being written jointly. The first of these was "The Forest Minstrel, and other Poems," published in 1823. In 1840 they went to Germany for the education of their children. In 1852–'54 Mr. Howitt was a gold-miner in Australia. Mrs. Howitt has written many books for the young, which have enjoyed great popularity, and has made translations from the German, Swedish, and Danish. Two of their daughters also have embarked in authorship. Of the following poems, "A June Day" and "The Departure of the Swallow," are by William Howitt; the others are by Mary.

A JUNE DAY.

WHO has not dreamed a world of bliss
On a bright sunny noon like this,
Couched by his native brooks's green maze,
With comrade of his boyish days,
While all around them seemed to be
Just as in joyous infancy?
Who has not loved at such an hour,
Upon that heath, in birchen bower,
Lulled in the poet's dreamy mood,
Its wild and sunny solitude?
While o'er the waste of purple ling
You mark a sultry glimmering;
Silence herself there seems to sleep,
Wrapped in a slumber long and deep,
Where slowly stray those lonely sheep
Through the tall foxglove's crimson bloom,
And gleaming of the scattered broom.
Love you not, then, to list and hear
The crackling of the gorse-flowers near,
Pouring an orange-scented tide
Of fragrance o'er the desert wide?
To hear the buzzard's whimpering shrill,
Hovering above you high and still?
The twittering of the bird that dwells
Among the heath's delicious bells?
While round your bed, o'er fern and blade,
Insects in green and gold arrayed,
The sun's gay tribes have lightly strayed;
And sweeter sound their humming wings
Than the proud minstrel's echoing strings.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SWALLOW.

AND is the swallow gone?
Who beheld it?
Which way sailed it?
Farewell bade it none?

No mortal saw it go;
But who doth hear
Its summer cheer
As it flitteth to and fro?

So the freed spirit flies!
From its surrounding clay
It steals away
Like the swallow from the skies.

Whither? wherefore doth it go?
'Tis all unknown;
We feel alone
That a void is left below.

SUMMER WOODS.

COME ye into the summer woods;
There entereth no annoy;
All greenly wave the chestnut-leaves,
And the earth is full of joy.

I cannot tell you half the sights
Of beauty you may see,
The bursts of golden sunshine,
And many a shady tree.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

There, lightly swung, in bowery glades,
The honey-suckles twine;
There blooms the rose-red campion,
And the dark-blue columbine.

There grows the four-leaved plant, "true love,"
In some dusk woodland spot;
There grows the enchanter's night-shade,
And the wood forget-me-not.

And many a merry bird is there,
Unscared by lawless men;
The blue-winged jay, the woodpecker,
And the golden-crested wren.

Come down, and ye shall see them all,
The timid and the bold;
For their sweet life of pleasantness,
It is not to be told.

And far within that summer wood,
Among the leaves so green,
There flows a little gurgling brook,
The brightest e'er was seen.

There come the little gentle birds,
Without a fear of ill;
Down to the murmuring water's edge,
And freely drink their fill!

And dash about and splash about,
The merry little things;
And look askance with bright black eyes,
And flirt their dripping wings.

I've seen the freakish squirrels drop
Down from their leafy tree,
The little squirrels with the old—
Great joy it was to me!

And down unto the running brook,
I've seen them nimbly go;
And the bright water seemed to speak
A welcome kind and low.

The nodding plants they bowed their heads
As if in heartsome cheer:
They spake unto these little things,
"'Tis merry living here!"

Oh, how my heart ran o'er with joy!
I saw that all was good,
And how we might glean up delight
All round us, if we would!

And many a wood-mouse dwelleth there,
Beneath the old wood shade,
And all day long has work to do,
Nor is of aught afraid.

The green shoots grow above their heads,
And roots so fresh and fine
Beneath their feet; nor is there strife
'Mong them for mine and thine.

There is enough for every one,
And they lovingly agree;
We might learn a lesson, all of us,
Beneath the greenwood tree.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

Sporting through the forest wide;
Playing by the water-side;
Wandering o'er the heathy fells;
Down within the woodland dells;
All among the mountains wild,
Dwelleth many a little child!
In the baron's hall of pride;
By the poor man's dull fireside;
'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen,
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless everywhere!
In the far isles of the main;
In the desert's lone domain;
In the savage mountain-glen,
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone;
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found!
Blessings on them! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy,
With their wishes, hopes, and fears;
With their laughter and their tears;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience!
Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known,
'Mid its labors and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares;
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod—
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified—
Little children, ye abide!

THE USE OF FLOWERS.

God might have bade the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree,
Without a flower at all.
We might have had enough, enough
For every want of ours,
For luxury, medicine, and toil,
And yet have had no flowers.

Then wherefore, wherefore were they made,
All dyed with rainbow-light,
All fashioned with supremest grace
Upspringing day and night:
Springing in valleys green and low,
And on mountains high,
And in the silent wilderness
Where no man passes by?

Our outward life requires them not—
Then wherefore had they birth?
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the earth;
To comfort man—to whisper hope,
Whene'er his faith is dim,
For whoso careth for the flowers
Will care much more for him!

Digitized by Google

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW.

A MIDSUMMER LEGEND.

"And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?"
"I've been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer-night to see!"

"And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?"
"I saw the glad sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

"And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?"
"I heard the drops of the water made,
And the ears of the green corn fill."

"Oh! tell me all, my Mary—
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night on the Caldon Low."

"Then take me on your knee, mother;
And listen, mother of mine:
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine;

"And their harp-strings rung so merrily
To their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the words of their talking
Were merrier far than all."

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That then you heard them say?"
"I'll tell you all, my mother;
But let me have my way.

"Some of them played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;
'And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill;

"'For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man will the miller be
At dawning of the day.

"'Oh! the miller, how he will laugh
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh
Till the tears fill both his eyes!'

"And some they seized the little winds
That sounded over the hill;
And each put a horn unto his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill;

"'And there,' they said, 'the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And they shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind old widow's corn.

"'Oh! the poor, blind widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be blithe enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands tall and strong.'

"And some they brought the brown lint-seed,
And flung it down from the Low;
'And this,' they said, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow.

"'Oh! the poor lame weaver,
How will he laugh outright
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

"And then out spoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin:
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

"'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another;
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother.'

"With that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon Low
There was no one left but me.

"And all on the top of the Caldon Low
The mists were cold and gray,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

"But, coming down from the hill-top,
I heard afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how the wheel did go.

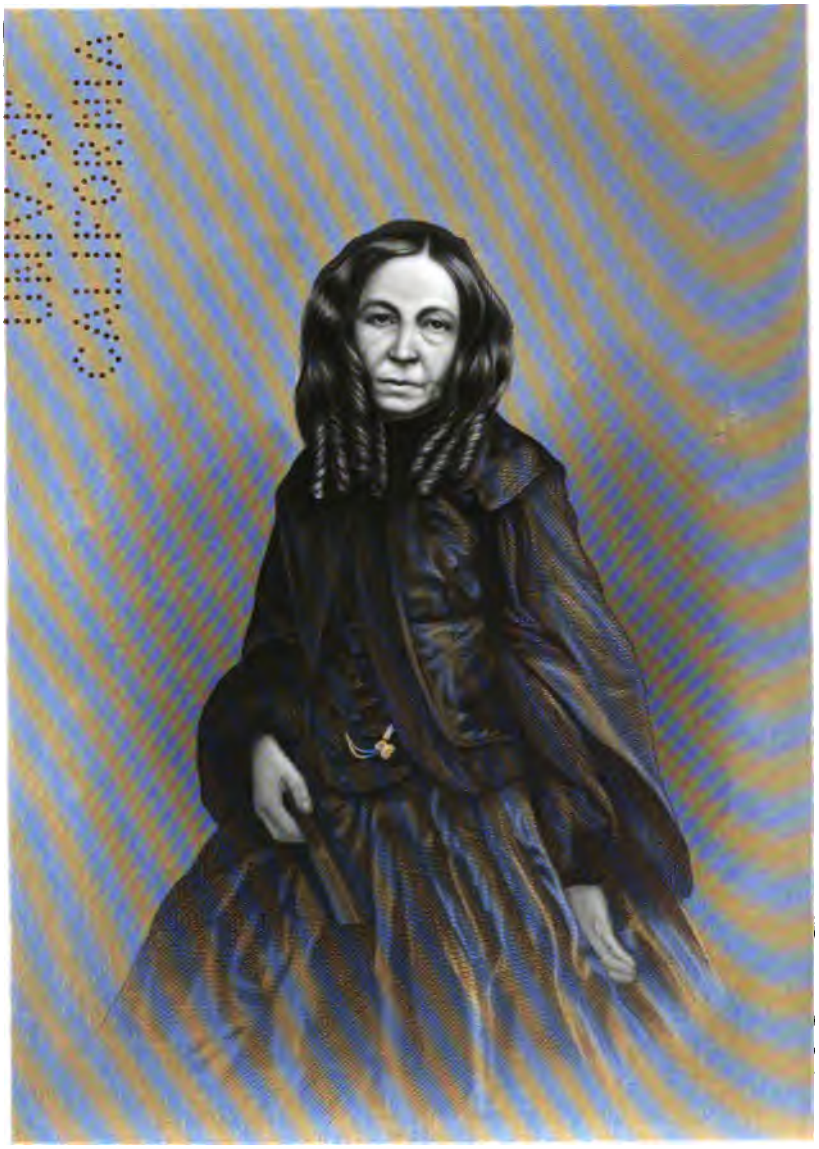
"And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, were seen
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn,
All standing stout and green.

"And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were sprung;
And I met the weaver at his gate,
With the good news on his tongue.

"Now this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, pr'ythee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



Sarah Barrett Browning.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Elizabeth Barrett was born near Ledbury, Herefordshire, in 1805. She received a thorough classical education, and began to write for publication very early. At the age of twenty-one she published "An Essay on Mind, with other Poems," but the entire contents of that volume were discarded by her in the later collections of her works. In 1833 she published a translation of the "Prometheus" of Æschylus, together with some minor poems. She did not consider the translation a success, and some years later she replaced it with the one which now stands in her works. In 1838 she published "The Seraphim, and other Poems," in which appear the first traces of her genius.

In 1837 she met with two serious misfortunes, which made her an invalid for years, and cast a shade of sadness over her whole life: the first was the rupture of a blood-vessel in her lungs; the other, the drowning of her brother near Torquay, Devonshire, in plain sight from a balcony where she stood powerless to help him. In a darkened room in London, surrounded by her books, but often suffering extreme pain which precluded all study, she passed the next nine years. Miss Mitford, who made her acquaintance about 1836, and became a warm personal friend, thus describes her in "Recollections of a Literary Life:" "Such is the influence of her manners, her conversation, her temper, her thousand sweet and attaching qualities, that they who know her best are apt to lose sight altogether of her learning and of her genius, and to think of her only as the most charming person that they have ever met. . . . Of a slight, delicate figure, with a shower of dark curls falling on either side of a most expressive face, large tender eyes richly fringed by dark eyelashes, a smile like a sunbeam, and such a look of youthfulness that I had some difficulty in persuading a friend, in whose carriage we went together to Chiswick, that the translatress of the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus, the authoress of the 'Essay on Mind,' was old enough to be introduced into company."

During these nine years of seclusion she studied especially the Greek philosophers and poets, and the Old Testament, and wrote a series of essays on the Greek Christian poets, which were published in the London *Athenæum*. In 1844 she revised her poems for a collected edition, which appeared that year in two volumes. Being required to write something more, to make the second volume equal in bulk to the first, she produced "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" at one sitting of twelve hours. In connection with this a pretty story is told, respecting her introduction to Robert Browning, but its authenticity has been disputed. The poem contains the stanza:

"Or at times a modern volume—Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyl,
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie—
Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if cut deep down the middle,
Shows a heart within, blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity."

It is said that the poet called to acknowledge the compliment in person, and by the blunder of a servant was shown into the darkened chamber where only Miss Barrett's most intimate friends were ever admitted, and that from this incident sprang the acquaintance which resulted in their marriage. The wedding took place in the autumn of 1846, and they went immediately to Italy, settling in Florence, which was their residence during the remainder of her life. The house they inhabited gave name to her next volume of poems, "Casa Guidi Windows," published in 1851.

Whatever may have been the outward circumstances of this most romantic and happy marriage, there is no question that the true history of her love is told in the so-called "Sonnets from the Portuguese," which, read consecutively as one poem, constitute her noblest and most perfect work. They were first printed in the second edition of her collected poems, 1850.

Their home in Florence has been thus described by a visitor: "Those who have known Casa Guidi as it was, can never forget the square anteroom, with its great picture and piano-forte at which the boy Browning passed many an hour, the little dining-room, covered with tapestry, where hung medallions of Tennyson, Carlyle, and Robert Browning—the large room, filled with plaster casts and studies, which was Mr. Browning's retreat; and, dearest of all, the large drawing-room, where *she* always sat. It opens upon a balcony filled with plants, and looks out upon the old iron-gray church of Santa Felice. There was something about this room that seemed to make it a proper and especial haunt for poets. The dark shadows and subdued light gave it a dreamy look, which was enhanced by the tapestry-covered walls and the old pictures of saints, that looked out sadly from their carved frames of black wood. Large bookcases, constructed of specimens of Florentine carving, selected by Mr. Browning, were brimming over with wise-looking books. Tables were covered with more gaily bound volumes, the gifts of brother authors. Dante's profile, a cast of Keats's

Digitized by Google

face and brow, taken after death, a pen-and-ink sketch of Tennyson, the genial face of John Kenyon (Mrs. Browning's good friend and relative), little paintings of the boy Browning, all attracted the eye in turn, and gave rise to a thousand musings. A quaint mirror, easy-chairs and sofas, and a hundred nothings that always add an indescribable charm, were all massed in this room. But the glory of all, and that which sanctified all, was seated in a low arm-chair near the door. A small table, strewed with writing-materials, books, and newspapers, was always by her side."

Her longest poem, "Aurora Leigh," a narrative in blank verse, was published in 1856. It is said that it was nearly completed before her husband knew of its existence. Her last publication was "Poems before the Congress," 1860, reissued in this country under the title of "Napoleon III. in Italy." She died in Florence on the morning of June 29, 1861. The best-known portrait of her is that by Buchanan Read.

Between Mrs. Browning and any other poetess who has written in English there is no comparison. Exactly where she should be ranked among our poets, it is difficult to say. She had more invention than many, and more learning than most; but she seems never to have exercised upon her work that severity of self-criticism which is absolutely necessary to the highest artistic achievements. Almost every poem she wrote is too long, and might have been improved by compression; and almost every one, too, exhibits instances of slip-shod versification too frequent to be excusable. But they will enjoy a long popularity nevertheless; for the spirit that gives them vitality is human sympathy developed to the dimensions of genius.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

I.

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said in mastery while I strove,
"Guess now who holds thee?" — "Death," I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang . . . "Not Death, but Love."

II.

BUT only three in all God's universe
Have heard this word thou hast said—Himself, beside
Thee speaking, and me listening! and replied
One of us . . . *that* was God . . . and laid the curse
So darkly on my eyelids, as to amerce
My sight from seeing thee—that if I had died,
The deathweights, placed there, would have signified
Less absolute exclusion. "Nay" is worse
From God than from all others, O my friend!
Men could not part us with their worldly jars,
Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend;
Our hands would touch for all the mountain-bars—
And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,
We should but vow the faster for the stars.

III.

UNLIKE are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art
A guest for queens to social pageantries,
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
Than tears even can make mine, to ply thy part
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
A poor, tired, wandering singer, . . . singing through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress-tree?
The chrism is on thine head—on mine, the dew—
And Death must dig the level where these agree.

IV.

THOU hast thy calling to some palace-floor,
Most gracious singer of high poems! where
The dancers will break footing, from the care
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.
And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor
For hand of thine? and canst thou think and bear
To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fulness at my door?
Look up and see the casement broken in,
The bats and owlets builders in the roof!
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
Hush, call no echo up in further proof
Of desolation! there's a voice within
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

V.

I LIFT my heavy heart up solemnly,
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Through the ashen grayness. If thy foot in scorn
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,
It might be well perhaps. But if instead
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
The gray dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
O my belovèd, will not shield thee so,
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred
The hair beneath. Stand further off then! go.

Digitized by Google

VI.

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore, . . .
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

VII.

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shall be, there or here;
And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear,
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

VIII.

What can I give thee back, O liberal
And princely giver, who has brought the gold
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,
And laid them on the outside of the wall
For such as I to take or leave withal,
In unexpected largesse? am I cold,
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold
High gifts, I render nothing back at all?
Not so; not cold—but very poor instead.
Ask God who knows. For frequent tears have run
The colors from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.
Go farther! let it serve to trample on.

IX.

Can it be right to give what I can give?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years
Re-sighing on my lips renunciative
Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live
For all thy adjurations? O my fears,
That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,
So to be lovers; and I own, and grieve,
That givers of such gifts as mine are, must
Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!
I will not soil thy purple with my dust,
Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,
Nor give thee any love . . . which were unjust.
Belovèd, I only love thee! let it pass.

X.

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn, or flax. An equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed,
And love is fire! and when I say at need,
I love thee . . . mark! . . . *I love thee!* . . . in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

XI.

And therefore if to love can be desert,
I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale
As these you see, and trembling knees that fail
To bear the burden of a heavy heart—
This weary minstrel-life that once was girt
To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail
To pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale
A melancholy music—why advert
To these things? O Belovèd, it is plain
I am not of thy worth nor for thy place!
And yet, because I love thee, I obtain
From that same love this vindicating grace,
To live on still in love, and yet in vain, . . .
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.

XII.

Indeed this very love which is my boast,
And which, when rising up from breast to brow,
Doth crown me with a ruby large enow
To draw men's eyes and prove the inner cost, . . .
This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,
I should not love withal, unless that thou
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,
When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,
And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak
Of love even, as a good thing of my own.
Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak,
And placed it by thee on a golden throne—
And that I love (O soul, we must be meek!)
Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

XIII.

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
Between our faces, to cast light on each?—
I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
My hand to hold my spirit so far off
From myself . . . me . . . that I should bring thee proof
In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
Commend my woman-love to thy belief—
Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
And rend the garment of my life, in brief,

Digitized by Google

By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

XIV.

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile . . . her look . . . her way
Of speaking gently, . . . for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day—"
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry—
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

XV.

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;
For we two look two ways and cannot shine
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.
On me thou lookest, with no doubting care,
As on a bee shut in a crystalline—
Since sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine,
And to spread wing and fly in the outer air
Were most impossible failure, if I strove
To fail so. But I look on thee . . . on thee . . .
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,
Hearing oblivion beyond memory!
As one who sits and gazes from above,
Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

XVI.

And yet, because thou overcomest so,
Because thou art more noble and like a king,
Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling
Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow
Too close against thine heart, henceforth to know
How it shook when alone. Why, conquering
May prove as lordly and complete a thing
In lifting upward as in crushing low!
And as a vanquished soldier yields his sword
To one who lifts him from the bloody earth—
Even so, Belovèd, I at last record,
Here ends my strife. If *thou* invite me forth,
I rise above abasement at the word.
Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

XVII.

My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes
God set between His After and Before,
And strike up and strike off the general roar
Of the rushing worlds, a melody that floats
In a serene air purely. Antidotes
Of medicated music, answering for
Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour
From thence into their ears. God's will devotes
Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine.
How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use?
A hope, to sing by gladly? . . . or a fine
Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse?
A shade, in which to sing . . . of palm or pine?
A grave, on which to rest from singing? . . .
Choose.

XVIII.

I never gave a lock of hair away
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully
I ring out to the full brown length and say,
"Take it." My day of youth went yesterday;
My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee.
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,
As girls do, any more. It only may
Now shade on two pale cheeks, the mark of tears,
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears
Would take this first, but Love is justified—
Take it thou, . . . finding pure, from all those years,
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

XIX.

The soul's Rialto hath its merchandise;
I barter curl for curl upon that mart,
And from my poet's forehead to my heart,
Receive this lock which outweighs argosies—
As purely black, as erst, to Pindar's eyes,
The dim purpureal tresses gloomed athwart
The nine white Muse-brows. For this counterpart,
Thy bay-crown's shade, Belovèd, I surmise,
Still lingers on thy curl, it is so black!
Thus with a fillet of smooth-kissing breath,
I tie the shadow safe from gliding back,
And lay the gift where nothing hindereth,
Here on my heart, as on thy brow, to lack
No natural heat till mine grows cold in death.

XX.

Belovèd, my Belovèd, when I think
That thou wast in the world a year ago,
What time I sate alone here in the snow
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
No moment at thy voice, . . . but, link by link,
Went counting all my chains, as if that so
They never could fall off at any blow
Struck by thy possible hand . . . why, thus I drink
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
With personal act or speech—nor ever cull
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

XXI.

Say over again, and yet once over again,
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it,
Remember never to the hill or plain,
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain,
Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
Belovèd, I, amid the darkness greeted
By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
Cry . . . "Speak once more . . . thou lovest!"
Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll—

Digitized by Google

Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll
The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence, with thy soul.

XXII.

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XXIII.

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead,
Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine?
And would the sun for thee more coldly shine,
Because of grave-damps falling round my head?
I marvelled, my Belovèd, when I read
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—
But . . . *so* much to thee? Can I pour thy wine
While my hands tremble? Then my soul instead
Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.
Then, love me, Love! look on me . . . breathe on me!
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,
For love, to give up acres and degree,
I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

XXIV.

Let the world's sharpness like a clasping knife
Shut in upon itself and do no harm
In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm,
And let us hear no sound of human strife
After the click of the shutting. Life to life—
I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,
And feel as safe as guarded by a charm
Against the stab of worldlings, who if rife
Are weak to injure. Very whitely still
The Lilies of our lives may reassure
Their blossoms from their roots, accessible
Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer;
Growing straight out of man's reach, on the hill.
God only, who made us rich, can make us poor.

XXV.

A heavy heart, Belovèd have I borne
From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringèd pearls . . . each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart. Then *thou* didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing
Which its own nature doth precipitate,
While thine doth close above it, mediating
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

XXVI.

I lived with visions for my company,
Instead of men and women, years ago,
And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know
A sweeter music than they played to me.
But soon their trailing purple was not free
Of this world's dust—their lutes did silent grow,
And I myself grew faint and blind below
Their vanishing eyes. Then thou didst come . . . to be,
Belovèd, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,
Their songs, their splendors (better yet the same,
As river-water hollowed into fonts)
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame
My soul with satisfaction of all wants—
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

XXVII.

My own belovèd, who hast lifted me
From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown,
And, in betwixt the languid ringlets, blown
A life-breath, till the forehead hopefully
Shines out again, as all the angels see,
Before thy saving kiss! My own, my own,
Who camest to me when the world was gone,
And I who looked for only God found *thee!*
I find thee; I am safe, and strong, and glad.
As one who stands in dewless asphodel,
Looks backward on the tedious time he had
In the upper life—so I, with bosom swell,
Make witness, here, between the good and bad,
That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.

XXVIII.

My letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white!—
And yet they seem alive and quivering
Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
And let them drop down on my knee to-night.
This said, . . . he wished to have me in his sight
Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .
Said, *Dear, I love thee;* and I sank and quailed
As if God's future thundered on my past.
This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled
With lying at my heart that beat too fast.
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,
If what this said, I dared repeat at last!

XXIX.

I think of thee!—my thoughts do twine and bud
About thee, as wild vines, about a tree,
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's naught to see
Except the straggling green which hides the wood.
Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood
I will not have my thoughts instead of thee,

Digitized by Google

Who art dearer, better! rather instantly
Renew thy presence. As a strong tree should,
Rustle thy boughs and set thy trunk all bare,
And let these bands of greenery which insphere thee
Drop heavily down, . . . burst, shattered everywhere!
Because, in this deep joy to see and hear thee
And breathe within thy shadow a new air,
I do not think of thee—I am too near thee.

XXX.

I SEE thine image through my tears to-night,
And yet to-day I saw thee smiling. How
Refer the cause?—Belovèd, is it thou,
Or I? who makes me sad? The acolyte
Amid the chanted joy and thankful rite,
May so fall flat, with pale insensate brow,
On the altar-stair. I hear thy voice and vow
Perplexed, uncertain, since thou art out of sight,
As he, in his swooning ears, the choir's amen.
Belovèd, dost thou love? or did I see all
The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when
Too vehement light dilated my ideal,
For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again,
As now these tears come . . . falling hot and real?

XXXI.

THOU comest! all is said without a word.
I sit beneath thy looks, as children do
In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through
Their happy eyelids from an unaverred
Yet prodigal inward joy. Behold, I erred
In that last doubt! and yet I cannot rue
The sin most, but the occasion . . . that we two
Should for a moment stand unministered
By a mutual presence. Ah, keep near and close,
Thou dovelike help! and, when my fears would rise,
With thy broad heart serenely interpose.
Brood down with thy divine sufficiencies
These thoughts which tremble when bereft of those,
Like callow birds left desert to the skies.

XXXII.

THE first time that the sun rose on thine oath
To love me, I looked forward to the moon
To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe.
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
For such man's love!—more like an out of tune
Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
Is laid down with the first ill-sounding note.
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
A wrong on *thee*. For perfect strains may float
'Neath master-hands from instruments defaced—
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

XXXIII.

YES, call me by my pet-name! let me hear
The name I used to run at, when a child,
From innocent play, and leave the cowslips piled,
To glance up in some face that proved me dear
With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear
Fond voices, which, being drawn and reconciled
Into the music of Heaven's undefiled,
Call me no longer. Silence on the bier,
While I call God . . . call God!—So let thy mouth
Be heir to those who are now exanimate.
Gather the north flowers to complete the south,
And catch the early love up in the late.
Yes, call me by that name—and I, in truth,
With the same heart, will answer, and not wait.

XXXIV.

WITH the same heart, I said, I'll answer thee
As those, when thou shalt call me by my name—
Lo, the vain promise! is the same, the same,
Perplexed and ruffled by life's strategy?
When called before, I told how hastily
I dropped my flowers or brake off from a game,
To run and answer with the smile that came
At play last moment, and went on with me
Through my obedience. When I answer now,
I drop a grave thought—break from solitude;—
Yet still my heart goes to thee . . . ponder how . . .
Not as to a single good, but all my good!
Lay thy hand on it, best one, and allow
That no child's foot could run fast as this blood.

XXXV.

IF I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors . . . another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more . . . as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas! I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within, the wet wings of thy dove.

XXXVI.

WHEN we met first and loved, I did not build
Upon the event with marble. Could it mean
To last, a love set pendulous between
Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,
Distrusting every light that seemed to gild
The onward path, and feared to overlean
A finger even. And, though I have grown serene
And strong since then, I think that God has willed
A still renewable fear . . . O love, O troth . .
Lest these enclaspèd hands should never hold,
This mutual kiss drop down between us both
As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold.
And Love, be false! if *he*, to keep one oath,
Must lose one joy, by his life's star foretold.

XXXVII.

PARDON, oh, pardon, that my soul should make
Of all that strong divineness which I know
For thine and thee, an image only so
Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.

Digitized by Google

It is that distant years which did not take
Thy sovranty, recoiling with a blow,
Have forced my swimming brain to undergo
Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake
Thy purity of likeness, and distort
Thy worthiest love to a worthless counterfeit.
As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port,
His guardian sea-god to commemorate,
Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snòrt
And vibrant tail, within the temple-gate.

XXXVIII.

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write!
And, ever since, it grew more clean and white, . . .
Slow to world-greetings . . . quick with its "Oh, list,
When the angels speak." A ring of amethyst
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss. The second passed in height
The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, "My love, my own."

XXXIX.

Because thou hast the power and own'st the grace
To look through and behind this mask of me,
(Against which years have beat thus blanchingly
With their rains), and behold my soul's true face,
The dim and weary witness of life's race!—
Because thou hast the faith and love to see,
Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,
The patient angel waiting for a place
In the new Heavens!—because nor sin nor woe,
Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighborhood,
Nor all which others viewing, turn to go, . . .
Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed, . . .
Nothing repels thee, . . . Dearest, teach me so
To pour out gratitude as thou dost, good.

XL.

Oh, yes! they love through all this world of ours!
I will not gainsay love, called love forsooth.
I have heard love talked in my early youth,
And since, not so long back but that the flowers,
Then gathered, smell still. Mussulmans and Giaours
Throw kerchiefs at a smile, and have no ruth
For any weeping. Polypheme's white tooth
Slips on the nut, if, after frequent showers,
The shell is over-smooth—and not so much
Will turn the thing called love, aside to hate,
Or else to oblivion. But thou art not such
A lover, my Belovèd! thou canst wait
Through sorrow and sickness, to bring souls to touch,
And think it soon when others cry, "Too late."

XLI.

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts,
With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks to all
Who paused a little near the prison-wall,
To hear my music in its louder parts,
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.
But thou, who, in my voice's sink and fall,
When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's
Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot,
To hearken what I said between my tears, . . .
Instruct me how to thank thee!—Oh, to shoot
My soul's full meaning into future years,
That *they* should lend it utterance, and salute
Love that endures, from Life that disappears!

XLII.

"*My future will not copy fair my past*"—
I wrote that once; and thinking at my side
My ministering life-angel justified
The word by his appealing look upcast
To the white throne of God, I turned at last,
And there, instead, saw thee, not unallied
To angels in thy soul!—then I, long tried
By natural ills, received the comfort fast,
While budding, at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff
Gave out green leaves with morning dews impearled.
I seek no copy now of life's first half;
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
And write me new my future's epigraph,
New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

XLIII.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every-day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

XLIV.

Belovèd, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
And winter, and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers,
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,
And wait thy weeding: yet here's eglantine,
Here's ivy!—take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colors true,
And tell thy soul, their roots are left in mine.

Digitized by Google

LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP.

A ROMANCE OF THE AGE.

A poet writes to his friend. PLACE—*A room in Wycombe Hall.* TIME—*Late in the evening.*

DEAR my friend and fellow-student, I would lean my spirit o'er you!
Down the purple of this chamber, tears should scarcely run at will.
I am humbled who was humble. Friend—I bow my head before you.
You should lead me to my peasants—but their faces are too still.

There's a lady—an earl's daughter—she is proud and she is noble,
And she treads the crimson carpet, and she breathes the perfumed air,
And a kingly blood sends glances up her princely eye to trouble,
And the shadow of a monarch's crown is softened in her hair.

She has halls among the woodlands, she has castles by the breakers,
She has farms and she has manors, she can threaten and command,
And the palpitating engines snort in steam across her acres,
As they mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of the land.

There are none of England's daughters who can show a prouder presence;
Upon princely suitors praying, she has looked in her disdain.
She was sprung of English nobles, I was born of English peasants;
What was *I* that I should love her—save for competence to pain?

I was only a poor poet, made for singing at her casement,
As the finches or the thrushes, while she thought of other things.
Oh, she walked so high above me, she appeared to my abasement,
In her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad in wings!

Many vassals bow before her as her carriage sweeps their door-ways;
She has blest their little children—as a priest or queen were she.
Far too tender, or too cruel far, her smile upon the poor was,
For I thought it was the same smile which she used to smile on *me*.

She has voters in the commons, she has lovers in the palace;
And of all the fair court ladies, few have jewels half as fine.
Oft the prince has named her beauty 'twixt the red wine and the chalice.
Oh, and what was *I* to love her? my beloved, my Geraldine!

Yet I could not choose but love her. I was born to poet-uses,
To love all things set above me, all of good and all of fair.
Nymphs of mountain, not of valley, we are wont to call the Muses;
And in nympholeptic climbing, poets pass from mount to star.
And because I was a poet, and because the public praised me
With a critical deduction for the modern writer's fault,
I could sit at rich men's tables—though the courtesies that raised me,
Still suggested clear between us the pale spectrum of the salt.

And they praised me in her presence—"Will your book appear this summer?"
Then returning to each other—"Yes, our plans are for the moors."
Then with whisper dropped behind me—"There he is! the latest comer!
Oh, she only likes his verses! what is over, she endures.

"Quite low-born! self-educated! somewhat gifted though by nature—
And we make a point of asking him—of being very kind.
You may speak, he does not hear you! and, besides, he writes no satire—
All the serpents kept by charmers leave the natural sting behind."

I grew scornfuller, grew colder, as I stood up there among them,
Till as frost intense will burn you, the cold scorning scorched my brow—
When a sudden silver speaking, gravely cadenced, overrung them,
And a sudden silken stirring touched my inner nature through.

I looked upward and beheld her. With a calm and regnant spirit,
Slowly round she swept her eyelids, and said clear before them all:
"Have you such superfluous honor, sir, that able to confer it
You will come down, Mister Bertram, as my guest to Wycombe Hall?"

Here she paused—she had been paler at the first word of her speaking.
But because a silence followed it, blushed somewhat, as for shame;
Then, as scorning her own feeling, resumed calmly—"I am seeking
More distinction than these gentlemen think worthy of my claim.

"Ne'ertheless, you see, I seek it—not because I am a woman"
(Here her smile sprang like a fountain, and, so, overflowed her mouth),
"But because my woods in Sussex have some purple shades at gloaming
Which are worthy of a king in state, or poet in his youth.

Digitized by Google

"I invite you, Mister Bertram, to no scene for wordly speeches—
Sir, I scarce should dare—but only where God asked the thrushes first—
And if *you* will sing beside them, in the covert of my beeches,
I will thank you for the woodlands, . . . for the human world, at worst."

Then she smiled around right childly, then she gazed around right queenly,
And I bowed—I could not answer; alternated light and gloom—
While as one who quells the lions, with a steady eye serenely,
She, with level fronting eyelids, passed out stately from the room.

Oh, the blessèd woods of Sussex, I can hear them still around me,
With their leafy tide of greenery still rippling up the wind.
Oh, the cursèd woods of Sussex! where the hunter's arrow found me,
When a fair face and a tender voice had made me mad and blind!

In that ancient hall of Wycombe, thronged the numerous guests invited,
And the lovely London ladies trod the floors with gliding feet;
And their voices low with fashion, not with feeling, softly freighted
All the air about the windows, with elastic laughters sweet.

For at eve, the open windows flung their light out on the terrace,
Which the floating orbs of curtains did with gradual shadow sweep,
While the swans upon the river, fed at morning by the heiress,
Trembled downward through their snowy wings at music in their sleep.

And there evermore was music, both of instrument and singing,
Till the finches of the shrubberies grew restless in the dark;
But the cedars stood up motionless, each in a moonlight ringing,
And the deer, half in the glimmer, strewed the hollows of the park.

And though sometimes she would bind me with her silver-corded speeches
To commix my words and laughter with the converse and the jest, [the beeches,
Oft I sat apart, and, gazing on the river through
Heard, as pure the swans swam down it, her pure voice o'erfloat the rest.

In the morning, horn of huntsman, hoof of steed, and laugh of rider,
Spread out cheery from the court-yard till we lost them in the hills,
While herself and other ladies, and her suitors left beside her,
Went a-wandering up the gardens through the laurels and abeles.

Thus, her foot upon the new-mown grass, bareheaded, with the flowing
Of the virginal white vesture gathered closely to her throat—
And the golden ringlets in her neck just quickened by her going,
And appearing to breathe sun for air, and doubting if to float—

With a branch of dewy maple, which her right hand held above her,
And which trembled a green shadow in betwixt her and the skies,
As she turned her face in going, thus, she drew me on to love her,
And to worship the divineness of the smile hid in her eyes.

For her eyes alone smile constantly: her lips have serious sweetness,
And her front is calm—the dimple rarely ripples on the cheek;
But her deep blue eyes smile constantly, as if they in discreetness
Kept the secret of a happy dream she did not care to speak.

Thus she drew me the first morning, out across into the garden,
And I walked among her noble friends and could not keep behind, [the warden
Spake she unto all and unto me—"Behold, I am
Of the song-birds in these lindens, which are cages to their mind.

"But within this swarded circle, into which the lime-walk brings us,
Whence the beeches, rounded greenly, stand away in reverent fear,
I will let no music enter, saving what the fountain sings us,
Which the lilies round the basin may seem pure enough to hear.

"The live air that waves the lilies, waves the slender jet of water
Like a holy thought sent feebly up from soul of fasting saint.
Whereby lies a marble Silence, sleeping! (Lough the sculptor wrought her),
So asleep she is forgetting to say Hush!—a fancy quaint.

"Mark how heavy white her eyelids! not a dream between them lingers.
And the left hand's index droppeth from the lips upon the cheek;
While the right hand—with the symbol rose held slack within the fingers—
Has fallen backward in the basin—yet this Silence will not speak!

"That the essential meaning growing may exceed the special symbol,
Is the thought as I conceive it: it applies more high and low.
Our true noblemen will often through right nobleness grow humble,
And assert an inward honor by denying outward show."

Digitized by Google

"Nay, your Silence," said I, "truly, holds her symbol rose but slackly,
Yet *she holds it*—or would scarcely be a Silence to our ken.
And your nobles wear their ermine on the outside, or walk blackly [men.
In the presence of the social law as mere ignoble

"Let the poets dream such dreaming! madam, in these British islands,
'Tis the substance that wanes ever, 'tis the symbol that exceeds.
Soon we shall have naught but symbol! and, for statues like this Silence,
Shall accept the rose's image—in another case, the weed's."

"Not so quickly," she retorted—"I confess, where'er you go, you
Find for things, names—shows for actions, and pure gold for honor clear.
But when all is run to symbol in the Social, I will throw you
The world's book which now reads dryly, and sit down with Silence here."

Half in playfulness she spoke, I thought, and half in indignation;
Friends who listened, laughed her words off, while her lovers deemed her fair.
A fair woman, flushed with feeling, in her noble-lighted station
Near the statue's white reposing—and both bathed in sunny air!

With the trees round, not so distant but you heard their vernal murmur,
And beheld in light and shadow the leaves in and outward move,
And the little fountain leaping toward the sun-heart to be warmer,
Then recoiling in a tremble from the too much light above.

'Tis a picture for remembrance. And thus, morning after morning,
Did I follow as she drew me by the spirit to her feet.
Why, her greyhound followed also! dogs—we both were dogs for scorning—
To be sent back when she pleased it, and her path lay through the wheat.

And thus morning after morning, spite of vows and spite of sorrow,
Did I follow at her drawing, while the week-days passed along,
Just to feed the swans this noontide, or to see the fawns to-morrow,
Or to teach the hill-side echo some sweet Tuscan in a song.

Ay, for sometimes on the hill-side, while we sate down in the gowans,
With the forest green behind us, and its shadow cast before,
And the river running under, and across it from the rowans
A brown partridge whirring near us, till we felt the air it bore

There, obedient to her praying, did I read aloud the poems
Made to Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of our own;
Read the pastoral parts of Spenser—or the subtile interflowings
Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book—the leaf is folded down!—

Or at times a modern volume—Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyl,
Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie—
Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, If cut deep down the middle,
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

Or at times I read there, hoarsely, some new poem of my making.
Poets ever fail in reading their own verses to their worth—
For the echo in you breaks upon the words which you are speaking,
And the chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which you drive them forth.

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence round us flinging
A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings at the breast,
She would break out, on a sudden, in a gush of woodland singing, [of rest.
Like a child's emotion in a god—a naiad tired

Oh, to see or hear her singing! scarce I know which is divinest—
For her looks sing too—she modulates her gestures on the tune;
And her mouth stirs with the song, like song; and when the notes are finest,
'Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light and seem to swell them on.

Then we talked—oh, how we talked! her voice, so cadenced in the talking,
Made another singing—of the soul! a music without bars.
While the leafy sounds of woodlands—humming round where we were walking,
Brought interposition worthy-sweet—as skies about the stars.

And she spake such good thoughts natural, as if she always thought them;
She had sympathies so rapid, open, free as bird on branch,
Just as ready to fly east as west, whichever way besought them,
In the birchen-wood a chirrup, or a cock-crow in the grange.

In her utmost lightness there is truth—and often she speaks lightly,
Has a grace in being gay, which even mournful souls approve,
For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck so rightly
As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above.

Digitized by Google

And she talked on—*we* talked, rather! upon all things, substance, shadow,
Of the sheep that browsed the grasses, of the reapers in the corn,
Of the little children from the schools, seen winding through the meadow—
Of the poor rich world beyond them, still kept poorer by its scorn.

So, of men, and so, of letters—books are men of higher stature,
And the only men that speak aloud for future times to hear;
So, of mankind in the abstract, which grows slowly into nature,
Yet will lift the cry of "progress," as it trod from sphere to sphere.

And her custom was to praise me when I said—"The Age culls simples,
With a broad clown's back turned broadly to the glory of the stars.
We are gods by our own reek'ning, and may well shut up the temples,
And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder of our cars.

"For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,
With, at every mile run faster—'O the wondrous, wondrous age,'
Little thinking if we work our SOULS as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.

"Why, what *is* this patient entrance into Nature's deep resources,
But the child's most gradual learning to walk upright without bane?
When we drive out, from the cloud of steam, majestical white horses,
Are we greater than the first men who led black ones by the mane?

If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in rising,
If we wrapped the globe intensely with one hot electric breath,
'Twere but power within our tether, no new spirit-power comprising,
And in life we were not greater men, nor bolder men in death."

She was patient with my talking; and I loved her, loved her certes,
As I loved all heavenly objects, with uplifted eyes and hands!
As I loved pure inspirations, loved the graces, loved the virtues,
In a Love content with writing his own name on desert sands.

Or at least I thought so, purely!—thought no idiot Hope was raising
Any crown to crown Love's silence—silent love that sate alone.
Out, alas! the stag is like me—he, that tries to go on grazing
With the great deep gun-wound in his neck, then reels with sudden moan.

It was thus I reeled. I told you that her hand had many suitors;
But she smiles them down imperially, as Venus did the waves,
And with such a gracious coldness, that they cannot press their futures
On the present of her courtesy, which yieldingly enslaves.

And this morning, as I sat alone within the inner chamber,
With the great saloon beyond it, lost in pleasant thought serene,
For I had been reading Camöens—that poem you remember,
Which his lady's eyes are praised in, as the sweetest ever seen.

And the book lay open, and my thought flew from it, taking from it
A vibration and impulsion to an end beyond its own,
As the branch of a green osier, when a child would overcome it,
Springs up freely from his clasping and goes swinging in the sun.

As I mused I heard a murmur—it grew deep as it grew longer—
Speakers using earnest language—"Lady Geraldine, you *would!*"
And I heard a voice that pleaded ever on, in accents stronger,
As a sense of reason gave it power to make its rhetoric good.

Well I knew that voice—it was an earl's of soul that matched his station,
Soul completed into lordship—might and right read on his brow;
Very finely courteous—far too proud to doubt his domination [by a bow.
Of the common people, he atones for grandeur

High straight forehead, nose of eagle, cold blue eyes, of less expression
Than resistance, coldly casting off the looks of other men,
As steel, arrows—unelastic lips, which seem to taste possession,
And be cautious lest the common air should injure or distrain.

For the rest, accomplished, upright—ay, and standing by his order
With a bearing not ungraceful; fond of art and letters too;
Just a good man made a proud man—as the sandy rocks that border
A wild coast, by circumstances, in a regnant ebb and flow.

Thus, I knew that voice—I heard it, and I could not help the hearkening,
In the room I stood up blindly, and my burning heart within
Seemed to seethe and fuse my senses, till they ran on all sides darkening,
And scorched, weighed, like melted metal round my feet that stood therein.

Digitized by Google

And that voice, I heard it pleading, for love's sake, for wealth, position,
For the sake of liberal uses, and great actions to be done—
And she interrupted gently, "Nay, my lord, the old tradition
Of your Normans, by some worthier hand than mine is, should be won."

"Ah, that white hand!" he said quickly—and in his he either drew it
Or attempted—for with gravity and instance she replied,
"Nay, indeed, my lord, this talk is vain, and we had best eschew it,
And pass on, like friends, to other points less easy to decide."

What he said again, I know not. It is likely that his trouble
Worked his pride up to the surface, for she answered in slow scorn,
"And your lordship judges rightly. Whom I marry, shall be noble,
Ay, and wealthy. I shall never blush to think how he was born."

There, I maddened! her words stung me. Life swept through me into fever,
And my soul sprang up astonished, sprang, full-statured in an hour.
Know you what it is when anguish, with apocalyptic NEVER,
To a Pythian height dilates you—and despair sublimes to power?

From my brain, the soul-wings budded—waved a flame about my body,
Whence conventions coiled to ashes. I felt self-drawn-out, as man,
From amalgamate false natures, and I saw the skies grow ruddy [what spirits can.
With the deepening feet of angels, and I knew

I was mad — inspired — say either! (anguish worketh inspiration),
Was a man, or beast—perhaps so, for the tiger roars, when speared;
And I walked on, step by step, along the level of my passion—
Oh, my soul! and passed the doorway to her face, and never feared.

He had left her, peradventure, when my footstep proved my coming—
But for *her*—she half arose, then sate—grew scarlet and grew pale.
Oh, she trembled!—'tis so always with a worldly man or woman
In the presence of true spirits—what else *can* they do but quail?

Oh, she fluttered like a tame bird, in among its forest-brothers
Far too strong for it; then drooping, bowed her face upon her hands—
And I spake out wildly, fiercely, brutal truths of her and others.
I, she planted in the desert, swathed her, wind-like, with my sands.
I plucked up her social fictions, bloody-rooted though leaf-verdant,
Trod them down with words of shaming—all the purple and the gold,
All the "landed stakes" and lordships, all, that spirits pure and ardent
Are cast out of love and honor because chancing not to hold.

"For myself I do not argue," said I, "though I love you, madam,
But for better souls that nearer to the height of yours have trod.
And this age shows, to my thinking, still more infidels to Adam, [God.
Than directly, by profession, simple infidels to

"Yet, O God," I said, "O grave," I said, "O mother's heart and bosom,
With whom first and last are equal, saint and corpse and little child!
We are fools to your deductions, in these figments of heart-closing.
We are traitors to your causes, in these sympathies defiled.

"Learn more reverence, madam, not for rank or wealth—*that* needs no learning,
That comes quickly—quick as sin does, ay, and culminates to sin;
But for Adam's seed, MAN! Trust me, 'tis a clay above your scorning,
With God's image stamped upon it, and God's kindling breath within.

"What right have you, madam, gazing in your palace mirror daily,
Getting so by heart your beauty which all others must adore,
While you draw the golden ringlets down your fingers, to vow gayly
You will wed no man that's only good to God, and nothing more?

"Why, what right have you, made fair by that same God—the sweetest woman
Of all women He has fashioned—with your lovely spirit-face,
Which would seem too near to vanish if its smile were not so human,
And your voice of holy sweetness, turning common words to grace!—

"What right *can* you have, God's other works to scorn, despise, revile them
In the gross, as mere men, broadly—not as *noble* men, forsooth—
As mere Pariahs of the outer world, forbidden to assoil them
In the hope of living, dying, near that sweetness of your mouth?

"Have you any answer, madam? If my spirit were less earthly,
If its instrument were gifted with a better silver string,
I would kneel down where I stand, and say—Behold me! I am worthy
Of thy loving, for I love thee! I am worthy as a king.

Digitized by Google

"As it is—your ermined pride, I swear, shall feel this stain upon her,
That *I*, poor, weak, tossed with passion, scorned by me and you again,
Love you, madam—dare to love you—to my grief and your dishonor,
To my endless desolation, and your impotent disdain!"

More mad words like these—mere madness! friend, I need not write them fuller,
For I hear my hot soul dropping on the lines in showers of tears.
Oh, a woman! friend, a woman! why, a beast had scarce been duller
Than roar bestial loud complaints against the shining of the spheres.

But at last there came a pause. I stood all vibrating with thunder
Which my soul had used. The silence drew her face up like a call.
Could you guess what word she uttered! She looked up, as if in wonder,
With tears beaded on her lashes, and said, "Bertram!" it was all.

If she had cursed me, and she might have—or if even, with queenly bearing
Which at need is used by women, she had risen up and said,
"Sir, you are my guest, and therefore I have given you a full hearing,
Now, beseech you, choose a name exacting somewhat less, instead—"

I had borne it!—but that "Bertram"—why it lies there on the paper
A mere word, without her accent—and you cannot judge the weight
Of the calm which crushed my passion. I seemed drowning in a vapor—
And her gentleness destroyed me whom her scorn made desolate.

So, struck backward and exhausted by that inward flow of passion
Which had rushed on, sparing nothing, into forms of abstract truth,
By a logic agonizing through unseemly demonstration,
And by youth's own anguish turning grimly gray the hairs of youth—

By the sense accursed and instant, that if even I spake wisely
I spake basely—using truth, if what I spake, indeed was true,
To avenge wrong on a woman—*her*, who sate there weighing nicely
A poor manhood's worth, found guilty of such deeds as I could do!—

By such wrong and woe exhausted—what I suffered and occasioned—
As a wild horse through a city runs with lightning in his eyes,
And then dashing at a church's cold and passive wall impassioned,
Strikes the death into his burning brain, and blindly drops and dies—

So I fell, struck down before her! do you blame me, friend, for weakness?
'Twas my strength of passion slew me!—fell before her like a stone.
Fast the dreadful world rolled from me, on its roaring wheels of blackness—
When the light came, I was lying in this chamber, and alone.

Oh, of course, she charged her lacqueys to bear out the sickly burden,
And to cast it from her scornful sight—but not *beyond* the gate;
She is too kind to be cruel, and too haughty not to pardon
Such a man as I—'twere something to be level to her hate.

But for me—you now are conscious why, my friend, I write this letter,
How my life is read all backward, and the charm of life undone.
I shall leave her house at dawn; I would to-night, if I were better—
And I charge my soul to hold my body strengthened for the sun.

When the sun has dyed the oriel, I depart, with no last gazes,
No weak moanings (one word only, left in writing for her hands),
Out of reach of all derision, and some unavailing praises,
To make front against this anguish in the far and foreign lands.

Blame me not. I would not squander life in grief—I am abstemious.
I but nurse my spirit's falcon, that its wing may soar again.
There's no room for tears of weakness in the blind eyes of a Phemius!
Into work the poet kneads them—and he does not die *till then*.

CONCLUSION.

Bertram finished the last pages, while along the silence ever,
Still in hot and heavy splashes, fell the tears on every leaf.
Having ended, he leans backward in his chair, with lips that quiver
From the deep unspoken, ay, and deep unwritten thoughts of grief.

Soh! how still the lady standeth! 'tis a dream—a dream of mercies!
'Twixt the purple lattice-curtains, how she standeth still and pale!
'Tis a vision, sure, of mercies, sent to soften his self-curses—
Sent to sweep a patient quiet o'er the tossing of his wail.

"Eyes," he said, "now throbbing through me! are ye eyes that did undo me?
Shining eyes, like antique jewels set in Parian statue-stone!

Digitized by Google

Underneath that calm white forehead, are ye ever burning torrid [life undone?"
O'er the desolate sand-desert of my heart and

With a murmurous stir uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain
Swelleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale brows,
While the gliding of the river sends a rippling noise forever
Through the open casement whitened by the moonlight's slant repose.

Said he—"Vision of a lady! stand there silent, stand there steady!
Now I see it plainly, plainly; now I cannot hope or doubt—
There, the brows of mild repression—there, the lips of silent passion,
Curvèd like an archer's bow to send the bitter arrows out."

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,
And approached him slowly, slowly, in a gliding measured pace;
With her two white hands extended, as if praying one offended, [face.
And a look of supplication, gazing earnest in his

Said he—"Wake me by no gesture—sound of breath, or stir of vesture?
Let the blessèd apparition melt not yet to its divine!
No approaching—hush, no breathing! or my heart must swoon to death in
The too utter life thou bringest—O thou dream of Geraldine!"

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling—
But the tears ran over lightly from her eyes, and tenderly—
"Dost thou, Bertram, truly love me? Is no woman far above me
Found more worthy of thy poet-heart than such a one as *I?*"

Said he—"I would dream so ever, like the flowing of that river,
Flowing ever in a shadow greenly onward to the sea!
So, thou vision of all sweetness—princely to a full completeness—
Would my heart and life flow onward—deathward—through this dream of THEE!"

Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,
While the silver tears ran faster down the blushing of her cheeks;
Then with both her hands enfolding both of his, she softly told him,
"Bertram, if I say I love thee, . . . 'tis the vision only speaks."

Softened, quickened to adore her, on his knee he fell before her—
And she whispered low in triumph, "It shall be as I have sworn!
Very rich he is in virtues—very noble—noble certes;
And I shall not blush in knowing that men call him lowly born."

RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

To the belfry, one by one, went the ringers from the sun,
Toll slowly.
And the oldest ringer said, "Ours is music for the Dead,
When the rebecks are all done."

Six abeles i' the churchyard grow on the north side in a row,
Toll slowly.
And the shadows of their tops rock across the little slopes
Of the grassy graves below.

On the south side and the west, a small river runs in haste,
Toll slowly.
And between the river flowing and the fair green trees a-growing
Do the dead lie at their rest.

On the east I sate that day, up against a willow gray,
Toll slowly.
Through the rain of willow-branches, I could see the low hill-ranges,
And the river on its way.

There I sate beneath the tree, and the bell tolled solemnly,
Toll slowly.
While the trees' and river's voices flowed between the solemn noises—
Yet death seemed more loud to me.

There, I read this ancient rhyme, while the bell did all the time
Toll slowly.
And the solemn knell fell in with the tale of life and sin,
Like a rhythmic fate sublime.

THE RHYME.

Broad the forest stood (I read) on the hills of Linteged—
Toll slowly.
And three hundred years had stood mute adown each hoary wood,
Like a full heart having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Toll slowly.
And but little thought was theirs of the silent antique years,
In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt large and red, on the towers of Linteged—

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange in fiery light,
While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back—
Toll slowly.
Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire
When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle-wall,
Toll slowly.
And the castle, seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights had stood,
And to-night was near its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since a bride did come—
Toll slowly.
One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the doors,
"May good angels bless our home!"

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies!
Toll slowly.
Oh, a bride of cordial mouth—where the untired smile of youth
Did light outward its own sighs!

'Twas a duke's fair orphan-girl, and her uncle's ward, the earl—
Toll slowly.
Who betrothed her twelve years old, for the sake of dowry gold,
To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,
Toll slowly.
Unto both those lords of Leigh, spake she out right sovranly,
"My will runneth as my blood.

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said—
Toll slowly.
"'Tis my will as lady free, not to wed a lord of Leigh,
But Sir Guy of Linteged."

The old earl he smilèd smooth, then he sighed for wilful youth—
Toll slowly.
"Good my niece, that hand withal looketh somewhat soft and small
For so large a will, in sooth."

She, too, smiled by that same sign—but her smile was cold and fine—
Toll slowly.
"Little hand clasps muckle gold, or it were not worth the hold
Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

Then the young lord jerked his breath and sware thickly in his teeth,
Toll slowly.
"He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed,
Let the life come or the death."

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise—
Toll slowly.
"Thy hound's blood, my lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,
And he moans not where he lies.

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!"
Toll slowly.
"By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned girl and dowered lady,
I deny you wife and ward."

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread.
Toll slowly.
Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest
Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridal train along the night-storm rode amain.
Toll slowly.
Hard the steeds of lord and serf struck their hoofs out on the turf,
In the pauses of the rain.

Fast and fain the kinsmen's train along the storm pursued amain—
Toll slowly.
Steed on steed-track, dashing off—thickening, doubling, hoof on hoof,
In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan steed of might,
Toll slowly.
And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,
Smiling out into the night.

"Dost thou fear?" he said at last—"Nay," she answered him in haste—
Toll slowly.
"Not such death as we could find—only life with one behind—
Ride on fast as fear—ride fast!"

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread—
Toll slowly.
Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks—down he staggered, down the banks,
To the towers of Linteged.

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed about—
Toll slowly.
In the courtyard rose the cry—"Live the Duchess and Sir Guy!"
But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropped her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck—

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
"I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh,"
Were the first words she did speak.

But a three months' joyance lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,
Toll slowly.
When five hundred archers tall stand beside the castle-wall,
To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back—
Toll slowly.
And a fortnight's siege is done—and, except the duchess, none
Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

Then the captain, young Lord Leigh, with his eyes so gray of blee,
Toll slowly.
And thin lips that scarcely sheathe the cold white gnashing of his teeth,
Gnashed in smiling, absently,

Cried aloud, "So goes the day, bridegroom fair of Duchess May!"
Toll slowly.
"Look thy last upon that sun! if thou seest to-morrow's one,
'Twill be through a foot of clay.

"Ha, fair bride! dost hear no sound, save that moaning of the hound?"—
Toll slowly.
"Thou and I have parted troth—yet I keep my vengeance-oath,
And the other may come round.

"Ha! thy will is brave to dare, and thy new love past compare"—
Toll slowly.
"Yet thine old love's falchion brave is as strong a thing to have,
As the will of lady fair.

"Peck on blindly, netted dove!—If a wife's name thee behove,"
Toll slowly.
"Thou shalt wear the same to-morrow, ere the grave has hid the sorrow
Of thy last ill-mated love.

"O'er his fixed and silent mouth, thou and I will call back troth."
Toll slowly.
"He shall altar be and priest—and he will not cry at least,
'I forbid you—I am loth!'

"I will wring thy fingers pale in the gauntlet of my mail."
Toll slowly.
"Little hand and muckle gold, close shall lie within my hold,
As the sword did, to prevail."

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Toll slowly.
Oh, and laughed the Duchess May, and her soul did put away
All his boasting for a jest.

In her chamber did she sit, laughing low to think of it—
Toll slowly.
"Tower is strong and will is free—thou canst boast, my lord of Leigh,
But thou boastest little wit."

In her tire-glass gazèd she, and she blushed right womanly.
Toll slowly.
She blushed half from her disdain—half, her beauty was so plain,
—"Oath for oath, my lord of Leigh!"

Straight she called her maidens in—"Since ye gave me blame herein,"
Toll slowly.
"That a bridal such as mine should lack gauds to make it fine,
Come and shrive me from that sin.

"It is three months gone to-day, since I gave mine hand away."
Toll slowly.
"Bring the gold and bring the gem, we will keep bride-state in them,
While we keep the foe at bay.

"On your arms I loose mine hair!—comb it smooth and crown it fair."
Toll slowly.
"I would look in purple pall from the lattice down the wall,
And throw scorn to one that's there!"

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west.
Toll slowly.
On the tower the castle's lord leaned in silence on his sword,
With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate.
Toll slowly.
They have almost sapped the wall—they will enter therewithal,
With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leaned upon, shivered, snapped upon the stone—
Toll slowly.
"Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a staff
When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!—tower is lost, and shame begun!"
Toll slowly.
"If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,
We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall"—

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
"But if *I* die here alone—then I die, who am but one,
And die nobly for them all.

"Five true friends lie for my sake, in the moat and in the brake—"
Toll slowly.
"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast,
And not one of these will wake.

"So no more of this shall be!—heart-blood weighs too heavily—"
Toll slowly.
"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave
Heaped around and over me.

"Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a plighted faith—"
Toll slowly.
"Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when Ronald speaks,
Albeit never a word she saith—

"These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too heavily:"
Toll slowly.
"And if *I* die here apart—o'er my dead and silent heart
They shall pass out safe and free.

"When the foe hath heard it said—'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'"
Toll slowly.
"That new corse new peace shall bring, and a blessèd blessèd thing
Shall the stone be at its head.—

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my memory—"
Toll slowly.
"Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride
Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her and entreat,"
Toll slowly.
"And their purple pall will spread underneath her fainting head,
While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers—"
Toll slowly.
"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again
By the sun-time of her years.

"Ah, sweet May! ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed thee my belief,"
Toll slowly.
"That thy name expressed thy sweetness—May of poets, in completeness!
Now my May-day seemeth brief."

All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim—

Toll slowly.
Till his true men in the place, wished they stood there face to face
With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends that wear faithful hearts to do and dare!"—
Toll slowly.
"Tower must fall, and bride be lost!—swear me service worth the cost!"
—Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand and swear, by the deed we failed in there,"
Toll slowly.
"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"
—Pale they stood around to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to do and dare!"—
Toll slowly.
"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all!
Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height."
Toll slowly.
"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far.
He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard him speaking so.
Toll slowly.
—"'Las! the noble heart," they thought—"he in sooth is grief-distraught.
Would we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply—
Toll slowly.
"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here, must ride fast,
As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,
Toll slowly.
Past the court, and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors,
But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower chambére, did the Duchess May repair.
Toll slowly.
"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,
That ye goad him up the stair."

Calm she stood; unbodkined through, fell her dark hair to her shoe—
Toll slowly.
And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-glass,
Had not time enough to go.

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! hope is gone like yesterday"—

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
"One half hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech!
Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

"In the east tower, high'st of all, loud he cries for steed from stall."
Toll slowly.
"He would ride as far," quoth he, "as for love and victory,
Though he rides the castle-wall.

"And we fetched the steed from stall, up where never a hoof did fall"—
Toll slowly.
"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens hear thee plead
If he rides the castle-wall."

Low she dropped her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor—
Toll slowly.
And tear after tear you heard fall distinct as any word
Which you might be listening for.

"Get thee in, thou soft ladye!—here is never a place for thee!"—
Toll slowly.
"Braid thine hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan
May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,
Toll slowly.
Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look
Right against the thunder place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside.—
Toll slowly.
"Go to, faithful friends, go to!—judge no more what ladies do—
No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke:
Toll slowly.
Soft he neighed to answer her, and then followed up the stair,
For the love of her sweet look.

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around!
Toll slowly.
Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,
Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, highest of all—there where never a hoof did fall—
Toll slowly.
Out they swept a vision steady—noble steed and lovely lady,
Calm as if in bower or stall.

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently—
Toll slowly.
And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes
Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife—and the sweet saints bless thy life!"
Toll slowly.
"In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed,
But no more of my noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun;"
Toll slowly.
"But by all my womanhood, which is proved so, true and good,
I will never do this one.

"Now by womanhood's degree, and by wifehood's verity,"
Toll slowly.
"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed,
Thou hast also need of *me*.

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand pardiè,"
Toll slowly.
"If, this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed from stall,
Shall be also room for *me*.

"So the sweet saints with me be" (did she utter solemnly),
Toll slowly.
"If a man, this eventide, on this castle-wall will ride,
He shall ride the same with *me*."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out bitter-well,
Toll slowly.
"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves,
To hear chime a vesper-bell?"

She clung closer to his knee—"Ay, beneath the cypress-tree!"—
Toll slowly.
"Mock me not, for otherwhere than along the greenwood fair,
Have I ridden fast with thee.

"Fast I rode with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house."
Toll slowly.
"What, and would you men should reck that I dared more for love's sake
As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb before all,"
Toll slowly.
"That a bride may keep your side while through castle-gate you ride,
Yet eschew the castle-wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain, but the small hands closed again.
Toll slowly.
Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track
With a frantic clasp and strain.

Evermore the foemen pour through the crash of window and door—
Toll slowly.
And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of "kill!" and "flee!"
Strike up clear amid the roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain—but they closed and clung again—
Toll slowly.
Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,
In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute, with her shuddering lips half shut.
Toll slowly.
Her head fallen as half in swound—hair and knee swept on the ground,
She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed back-thrown on the slippery coping-stone.
Toll slowly.
Back the iron hoofs did grind on the battlement behind,
Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode—
Toll slowly.
"Friends, and brothers, save my wife!—Pardon, sweet, in change for life—
But I ride alone to God."

Straight as if the Holy name had upbreathed her like a flame,
Toll slowly.
She upsprang, she rose upright—in his selle she sate in sight,
By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest—
Toll slowly.
"Ring," she cried, "O vesper-bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle!
But the passing-bell rings best."

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain—
Toll slowly.
For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,
On the last verge rears amain.

Now he hangs, he rocks between, and his nostrils curdle in!—
Toll slowly.
Now he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall off,
And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human woe from his staring eyes did go,
Toll slowly.
And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony
Of the headlong death below—

And, "Ring, ring, thou passing-bell," still she cried, "i' the old chapelle!"
Toll slowly.
Then back-toppling, crashing back—a dead weight flung out to wrack,
Horse and riders overfell.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Toll slowly.
And I read this ancient Rhyme, in the churchyard, while the chime
Slowly tolled for one at rest.

The abeles moved in the sun, and the river smooth did run,
Toll slowly.
And the ancient Rhyme rang strange, with its passion and its change,
Here, where all done lay undone.

And beneath a willow-tree, I a little grave did see,
Toll slowly.
Where was graved—HERE UNDEFILED, LIETH MAUD, A THREE-YEAR CHILD,
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-THREE.

Then, O spirits, did I say, ye who rode so fast that day—
Toll slowly.
Did star-wheels and angel wings, with their holy winnowings,
Keep beside you all the way?

Though in passion ye would dash, with a blind and heavy crash,
Toll slowly.
Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field—
Though your heart and brain were rash—

Now, your will is all unwilled—now, your pulses are all stilled!
Toll slowly.
Now, ye lie as meek and mild (whereso laid) as Maud the child,
Whose small grave was lately filled.

Beating heart and burning brow, ye are very patient now,
Toll slowly.
And the children might be bold to pluck the kingcups from your mould
Ere a month had let them grow.

And you let the goldfinch sing in the alder near in spring,

Digitized by Google

Toll slowly.
Let her build her nest and sit all the three weeks
out on it,
Murmuring not at any thing.

In your patience ye are strong; cold and heat
ye take not wrong:
Toll slowly.
When the trumpet of the angel blows eternity's
evangel,
Time will seem to you not long.

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds
sang west,
Toll slowly.
And I said in underbreath, "All our life is mixed
with death,
And who knoweth which is best?"

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds
sang west,
Toll slowly.
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed
around our incompleteness—
Round our restlessness, His rest.

BERTHA IN THE LANE.

Put the broidery-frame away,
For my sewing is all done.
The last thread is used to-day,
And I need not join it on.
Though the clock stands at the noon,
I am weary. I have sewn,
Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,
And stand near me, Dearest-sweet.
Do not shrink nor be afraid,
Blushing with a sudden heat!
No one standeth in the street?—
By God's love I go to meet,
Love I thee with love complete.

Lean thy face down! drop it in
These two hands, that I may hold
'Twixt their palms thy cheek and chin,
Stroking back the curls of gold.
'Tis a fair, fair face, in sooth—
Larger eyes and redder mouth
Than mine were in my first youth.

Thou art younger by seven years—
Ah!—so bashful at my gaze,
That the lashes, hung with tears,
Grow too heavy to upraise?
I would wound thee by no touch
Which thy shyness feels as such.
Dost thou mind me, Dear, so much?

Have I not been nigh a mother
To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear?
Have we not loved one another
Tenderly, from year to year,
Since our dying mother mild
Said with accents undefiled,
"Child, be mother to this child!"

Mother, mother, up in heaven,
Stand upon the jasper sea,
And be witness I have given
All the gifts required of me—
Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,
Love, that left me with a wound,
Life itself, that turneth round!

Mother, mother, thou art kind,
Thou art standing in the room,
In a molten glory shrined,
That rays off into the gloom!
But thy smile is bright and bleak
Like cold waves—I cannot speak—
I sob in it, and grow weak.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof
One hour longer from my soul—
For I still am thinking of
Earth's warm-beating joy and dole!
On my finger is a ring
Which I still see glittering,
When the night hides everything.

Little sister, thou art pale!
Ah, I have a wandering brain—
But I lose that fever-bale,
And my thoughts grow calm again.
Lean down closer—closer still!
I have words thine ear to fill—
And would kiss thee at my will.

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,
Thee and Robert—through the trees—
When we all went gathering
Boughs of May-bloom for the bees.
Do not start so! think instead
How the sunshine overhead
Seemed to trickle through the shade.

What a day it was, that day!
Hills and vales did openly
Seem to heave and throb away
At the sight of the great sky.
And the Silence as it stood
In the Glory's golden flood,
Audibly did bud—and bud.

Through the winding hedgerows green,
How we wandered, I and you—
With the bowery tops shut in,
And the gates that showed the view!
How we talked there! thrushes soft
Sang our praises out—or oft
Bleatings took them from the croft:

Till the pleasure, grown too strong,
Left me muter evermore,
And, the winding road being long,
I walked out of sight, before,
And so, wrapt in musings fond,
Issued (past the wayside pond)
On the meadow-lands beyond.

I sate down beneath the beech
Which leans over to the lane,
And the far sound of your speech
Did not promise any pain;
And I blessed you full and free,
With a smile stooped tenderly
O'er the May-flowers on my knee.

Digitized by Google

But the sound grew into word
As the speakers drew more near—
Sweet, forgive me that I heard
What you wished me not to hear.
Do not weep so—do not shake—
Oh—I heard thee, Bertha, make
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand
In thy thoughts, untouched by blame.
Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim?
That was wrong perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will, again.
Women cannot judge for men.

Had he seen thee, when he swore
He would love but me alone?
Thou wert absent —sent before
To our kin in Sidmouth town.
When he saw thee who art best
Past compare, and loveliest,
He but judged thee as the rest.

Could we blame him with grave words,
Thou and I, Dear, if we might?
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds,
Flying straightway to the light:
Mine are older.—Hush!—look out—
Up the street! Is none without?
How the poplar swings about!

And that hour—beneath the beech,
When I listened in a dream,
And he said in his deep speech,
That he owed me all *esteem*—
Each word swam in on my brain
With a dim, dilating pain,
Till it burst with that last strain.

I fell flooded with a Dark,
In the silence of a swoon.
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night—I saw the moon.
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand—
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand,
Somewhat coldly—with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence,
And a "Poor thing" negligence.

And I answered coldly too—
When you met me at the door;
And I only *heard* the dew
Dripping from thee to the floor.
And the flowers I bade you see,
Were too withered for the bee,
As my life, henceforth, for me.

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm!
All was best as it befell.
If I say he did me harm,
I speak wild—I am not well.
All his words were kind and good—
He esteemed me! Only, blood
Runs so faint in womanhood.

Then I always was too grave—
Liked the saddest ballad sung—
With that look, besides, we have
In our faces, who die young.
I had died, Dear, all the same;
Life's long, joyous, jostling game
Is too loud for my meek shame.

We are so unlike each other,
Thou and I, that none could guess
We were children of one mother,
But for mutual tenderness.
Thou art rose-lined from the cold,
And meant, verily, to hold
Life's pure pleasures manifold.

I am pale as crocus grows
Close beside a rose-tree's root;
Whosoe'er would reach the rose,
Treads the crocus underfoot.
I, like May-bloom on thorn-tree—
Thou like merry summer-bee!
Fit, that I be plucked for thee.

Yet who plucks me?—no one mourns,
I have lived my season out,
And now die of my own thorns
Which I could not live without.
Sweet, be merry! How the light
Comes and goes! If it be night,
Keep the candles in my sight.

Are there footsteps at the door?
Look out quickly. Yea, or nay?
Some one might be waiting for
Some last word that I might say.
Nay? So best!—so angels would
Stand off clear from deathly road,
Not to cross the sight of God.

Colder grow my hands and feet.
When I wear the shroud I made,
Let the folds lie straight and neat,
And the rosemary be spread,
That if any friend should come,
(To see *thee*, sweet!) all the room
May be lifted out of gloom.

And, dear Bertha, let me keep
On my hand this little ring,
Which, at nights, when others sleep,
I can still see glittering.
Let me wear it out of sight,
In the grave—where it will light
All the Dark up, day and night.

On that grave, drop not a tear!
Else, though fathom-deep the place,
Through the woollen shroud I wear
I shall feel it on my face.
Rather smile there, blessèd one,
Thinking of me in the sun,
Or forget me—smiling on!

Art thou near me? nearer? so!
Kiss me close upon the eyes,
That the earthly light may go
Sweetly, as it used to rise,
When I watched the morning-gray
Strike, betwixt the hills, the way
He was sure to come that day.

Digitized by Google

So—no more vain words be said!—
The hosannas nearer roll.
Mother, smile now on thy Dead,
I am death-strong in my soul.
Mystic Dove alit on cross,
Guide the poor bird of the snows
Through the snow-wind above loss!

Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,
And absorb the poor libation!
Wind my thread of life up higher,
Up, through angels' hands of fire!—
I aspire while I expire.

CATARINA TO CAMOENS;

DYING IN HIS ABSENCE ABROAD, AND REFERRING TO THE POEM IN WHICH HE RECORDED THE SWEETNESS OF HER EYES.

On the door you will not enter,
I have gazed too long—adieu!
Hope withdraws her peradventure—
Death is near me—and not *you*.
Come, O lover,
Close and cover
These poor eyes, you called, I ween,
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

When I heard you sing that burden
In my vernal days and bowers,
Other praises disregarding,
I but hearkened that of yours—
Only saying,
In heart-playing,
"Blessèd eyes mine eyes have been,
If the sweetest HIS have seen!"

But all changes. At this vesper,
Cold the sun shines down the door.
If you stood there, would you whisper,
"Love, I love you," as before—
Death pervading
Now and shading
Eyes you sang of, that yestreen,
As the sweetest ever seen?

Yes, I think, were you beside them,
Near the bed I die upon—
Though their beauty you denied them,
As you stood there, looking down,
You would truly
Call them duly,
For the love's sake found therein—
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

And if *you* looked down upon them,
And if *they* looked up to *you*,
All the light which has foregone them
Would be gathered back anew.
They would truly
Be as duly
Love-transformed to beauty's sheen—
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

But, ah me! you only see me,
In your thoughts of loving man,
Smiling soft perhaps and dreamy
Through the wavings of my fan—
And unweeting
Go repeating,
In your reverie serene,
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

While my spirit leans and reaches
From my body still and pale,
Fain to hear what tender speech is
In your love to help my bale—
O my poet,
Come and show it!
Come, of latest love, to glean
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

O my poet, O my prophet,
When you praised their sweetness so,
Did you think, in singing of it,
That it might be near to go?
Had you fancies
From their glances,
That the grave would quickly screen
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?"

No reply! the fountain's warble
In the court-yard sounds alone.
As the water to the marble
So my heart falls with a moan
From love-sighing
To this dying.
Death forerunneth Love to win
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

Will you come? When I'm departed
Where all sweetnesses are hid;
Where thy voice, my tender-hearted,
Will not lift up either lid.
Cry, O lover,
Love is over!
Cry beneath the cypress green—
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

When the angelus is ringing,
Near the convent will you walk,
And recall the choral singing
Which brought angels down our talk?
Spirit-shriven
I viewed Heaven,
Till you smiled—"Is earth unclean,
'Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?'"

When beneath the palace-lattice,
You ride slow as you have done,
And you see a face there—that is
Not the old familiar one—
Will you oftly
Murmur softly,
"Here, ye watched me morn and e'en,
Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

When the palace-ladies, sitting
Round your gittern, shall have said,
"Poet sing those verses written
For the lady who is dead,"
Will you tremble,
Yet dissemble—
Or sing hoarse, with tears between,
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen?"

Digitized by Google

"Sweetest eyes!" how sweet in flowings
The repeated cadence is!
Though you sang a hundred poems,
Still the best one would be this.
I can hear it
'Twixt my spirit
And the earth-noise intervene—
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

But the priest waits for the praying,
And the choir are on their knees,
And the soul must pass away in
Strains more solemn high than these.
Miserere
For the weary!
Oh, no longer for Catrine,
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

Keep my ribbon, take and keep it,
(I have loosed it from my hair) *
Feeling, while you overweep it,
Not alone in your despair,
Since with saintly
Watch unfaintly
Out of heaven shall o'er you lean
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

But—but *now*—yet unremovèd
Up to Heaven they glisten fast.
You may cast away, Belovèd,
In your future all my past.
Such old phrases
May be praises
For some fairer bosom-queen—
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen!"

Eyes of mine, what are ye doing?
Faithless, faithless—praised amiss
If a tear be of your showing,
Dropped for any hope of HIS!
Death has boldness
Besides coldness,
If unworthy tears demean
"Sweetest eyes, were ever seen."

I will look out to his future;
I will bless it till it shine.
Should he ever be a suitor
Unto sweeter eyes than mine,
Sunshine gild them,
Angels shield them,
Whatsoever eyes terrene
Be the sweetest HIS have seen!

DE PROFUNDIS.

THE face which, duly as the sun,
Rose up for me with life begun,
To mark all bright hours of the day
With daily love, is dimmed away—
And yet my days go on, go on.

The tongue which, like a stream, could run
Smooth music from the roughest stone,
And every morning with "Good-day"
Made each day good, is hushed away—
And yet my days go on, go on.

The heart which, like a staff, was one
For mine to lean and rest upon;
The strongest on the longest day
With steadfast love, is caught away—
And yet my days go on, go on.

And cold before my summer's done,
And deaf in Nature's general tune,
And fallen too low for special fear,
And here, with hope no longer here—
While the tears drop, my days go on.

The world goes whispering to its own,
"This anguish pierces to the bone."
And tender friends go sighing round,
"What love can ever cure this wound?"
My days go on, my days go on.

The past rolls forward on the sun
And makes all night. O dreams begun,
Not to be ended! Ended bliss!
And life, that will not end in this!
My days go on, my days go on.

Breath freezes on my lips to moan;
As one alone, once not alone,
I sit and knock at Nature's door,
Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,
Whose desolated days go on.

I knock and cry, . . . Undone, undone!
Is there no help, no comfort . . . none?
No gleaning in the wide wheat-plains
Where others drive their loaded wains?
My vacant days go on, go on.

This Nature though the snows be down,
Thinks kindly of the bird of June.
The little red hip on the tree
Is ripe for such. What is for me,
Whose days so winterly go on?

No bird am I to sing in June,
And dare not ask an equal boon.
Good nests and berries red are Nature's
To give away to better creatures—
And yet my days go on, go on.

I ask less kindness to be done—
Only to loose these pilgrim-shoon
(Too early worn and grimed) with sweet
Cool deathly touch to these tired feet,
Till days go out which now go on.

Only to lift the turf unmown
From off the earth where it has grown,
Some cubit-space, and say, "Behold,
Creep in, poor Heart, beneath that fold,
Forgetting how the days go on."

What harm would *that* do? Green anon
The sward would quicken, overshone
By skies as blue; and crickets might
Have leave to chirp there day and night
While my new rest went on, went on.

From gracious Nature have I won
Such liberal bounty? May I run
So, lizard-like, within her side,
And there be safe, who now am tried
By days that painfully go on?

* She left him the ribbon from her hair.

Digitized by Google

—A Voice reproves me thereupon,
More sweet than Nature's, when the drone
Of bees is sweetest, and more deep,
Than when the rivers overleap
The shuddering pines, and thunder on.

God's Voice, not Nature's—night and noon
He sits upon the great white throne
And listens for the creatures' praise.
What babble we of days and days?
The Dayspring He, whose days go on.

He reigns above, he reigns alone:
Systems burn out and leave His throne:
Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall
Around Him, changeless amid all!—
Ancient of days, whose days go on!

He reigns below, He reigns alone,—
And having life in love foregone
Beneath the crown of sovran thorns,
He reins the jealous God. Who mourns
Or rules with HIM, while days go on?

By anguish which made pale the sun,
I hear Him charge his saints that none
Among the creatures anywhere
Blaspheme against Him with despair,
However darkly days go on.

—Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown!
No mortal grief deserves that crown.
O supreme Love, chief misery,
The sharp regalia are for *Thee*
Whose days eternally go on!

For us, . . . whatever's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done.
Grief may be joy misunderstood:
Only the Good discerns the good.
I trust Thee while my days go on.

Whatever's lost, it first was won:
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here [clear.
That Heaven's new wine might show more
I praise Thee while my days go on!

I praise Thee while my days go on;
I love Thee while my days go on!
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost
I thank Thee while my days go on!

And, having in thy life-depth thrown
Being and suffering (which are one),
As a child drops some pebble small
Down some deep well and hears it fall,
Smiling . . . so I! THY DAYS GO ON!

MOTHER AND POET.

(TURIN—AFTER NEWS FROM GAETA. 1861.)

DEAD! one of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast,
And are wanting a great song for Italy free,
Let none look at *me!*

Yet I was a poetess only last year,
And good at my art for a woman, men said.
But *this* woman, *this*, who is agonized here,
The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head
Forever instead.

What art can a woman be good at? Oh, vain!
What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain?
Ah, boys, how you hurt! you were strong as you pressed,
And *I* proud, by that test.

What art's for a woman? To hold on her knees
Both darlings! to feel all their arms round her throat
Cling, strangle a little! to sew by degrees
And 'broider the long-clothes and neat littte coat!
To dream and to dote.

To teach them . . . It stings there. *I* made them indeed
Speak plain the word "country." *I* taught them no doubt
That a country's a thing men should die for at need.
I prated of liberty, rights, and about
The tyrant turned out.

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful eyes! . . .
I exulted! nay, let them go forth at the wheels
Of the guns, and denied not.—But then the surprise,
When one sits quite alone!—Then one weeps, then one kneels!
—God! how the house feels!

At first happy news came, in gay letters moiled
With my kisses, of camp-life and glory, and how
They both loved me, and soon, coming home to be spoiled,
In return would fan off every fly from my brow
With their green laurel-bough.

Then was triumph at Turin. "Ancona was free!"
And some one came out of the cheers in the street
With a face pale as a stone, to say something to me.
—My Guido was dead!—I fell down at his feet,
While they cheered in the street.

I bore it:—friends soothed me: my grief looked sublime
As the ransom of Italy. One boy remained
To be leaned on and walked with, recalling the time
When the first grew immortal, while both of us strained
To the height he had gained.

Digitized by Google

And letters still came—shorter, sadder, more strong,
Writ now but in one hand. "I was not to faint.
One loved me for two . . . would be with me ere long:
And 'Viva Italia' *he* died for, our saint,
Who forbids our complaint."

My Nannie would add "he was safe, and aware
Of a presence that turned off the balls . . . was impressed
It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,
And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossessed,
To live on for the rest."

On which without pause up the telegraph-line
Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta:—*Shot.*
Tell his mother. Ah, ah—"his," "their" mother: not "mine."
No voice says "*my* mother" again to me. What!
You think Guido forgot?

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,
They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe?
I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven
Through that Love and Sorrow which reconciled so
The Above and Below.

O Christ of the seven wounds, who look'dst through the dark
To the face of Thy mother! consider, I pray,
How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,
Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned away,
And no last word to say!

Both boys dead! but that's out of nature. We all
Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep one.
'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall.
And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done
If we have not a son?

Ah, ah, ah! when Gaeta's taken, what then?
When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport
Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men?
When your guns of Cavalli with final retort
Have cut the game short—

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,
When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green, and red,
When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,
When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,
(And I have my Dead),

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,
And burn your lights faintly!—*My* country is there,
Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow.
My Italy's there—with my brave civic Pair,
To disfranchise despair.

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,
And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn.
But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length
Into wail such as this!—and we sit on forlorn
When this man-child is born.

Dead!—one of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea!
Both! both my boys!—If in keeping the feast
You want a great song for your Italy free,
Let none look at *me!*

ONLY A CURL.

Friends of faces unknown and a land
Unvisited over the sea,
Who tell me how lonely you stand,
With a single gold curl in the hand
Held up to be looked at by me!—

While you ask me to ponder and say
What a father and mother can do,
With the bright yellow locks put away
Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay,
Where the violets press nearer than you:—

Shall I speak like a poet, or run
Into weak woman's tears for relief?
O children! I never lost one.
But my arm's round my own little son,
And Love knows the secret of Grief.

And I feel what it must be and is
When God draws a new angel so
Through the house of a man up to His,
With a murmur of music you miss,
And a rapture of light you forego.

How you think, staring on at the door
Where the face of your angel flashed in,
That its brightness, familiar before,
Burns off from you ever the more
For the dark of your sorrow and sin.

"God lent him and takes him," you sigh . .
—Nay, there let me break with your pain.
God's generous in giving, say I,
And the thing which He gives, I deny
That He ever can take back again.

He gives what he gives. I appeal
To all who bare babes! In the hour
When the vail of the body we feel
Rent round us, while torments reveal
The motherhood's advent in power,

Digitized by Google

And the babe cries—have all of us known
By apocalypse (God being there,
Full in nature!) the child is *our own*—
Life of life, love of love, moan of moan,
Through all changes, all times, everywhere.

He's ours and forever. Believe,
O father!—O mother, look back
To the first love's assurance! To give
Means, with God, not to tempt or deceive
With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

He gives what he gives: be content.
He resumes nothing given—be sure.
God lend?—where the usurers lent
In His temple, indignant he went
And scourged away all those impure.

He lends not, but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'Tis to add to it rather . . . amend,
And finish it up to your dream—

Or keep . . . as a mother may toys
Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room shall be stiller from noise,
And the children more fit for such joys,
Kept over their heads on the shelf.

So look up, friends! You who indeed
Have possessed in your house a sweet piece
Of the Heaven which men strive for, must need
Be more earnest than others are, speed
Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

You know how one angel smiles there.
Then, courage! 'Tis easy for you
To be drawn by a single gold hair
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair
To the safe place above us. Adieu!

A CHILD'S GRAVE AT FLORENCE.

A. A. E. C.

Born, July, 1848. Died, November, 1849.

Of English blood, of Tuscan birth,
What country should we give her?
Instead of any on the earth,
The civic Heavens receive her.

And here, among the English tombs,
In Tuscan ground we lay her,
While the blue Tuscan sky endomes
Our English words of prayer.

A little child!—how long she lived,
By months, not years, is reckoned:
Born in one July, she survived
Alone to see a second.

Bright featured, as the July sun
Her little face still played in,
And splendors, with her birth begun,
Had had no time for fading.

So Lily, from those July hours,
No wonder we should call her;
She looked such kinship to the flowers,
Was but a little taller.

A Tuscan Lily—only white,
As Dante, in abhorrence
Of red corruption, wished aright
The lilies of his Florence.

We could not wish her whiter—her
Who perfumed with pure blossom
The house!—a lovely thing to wear
Upon a mother's bosom!

This July creature thought perhaps
Our speech not worth assuming;
She sate upon her parents' laps,
And mimicked the gnat's humming:

Said "father," "mother"—then, left off,
For tongues celestial, fitter.
Her hair had grown just long enough
To catch heaven's jasper-glitter.

Babes! Love could always hear and see
Behind the cloud that hid them.
"Let little children come to me,
And do not thou forbid them."

So, unforbidding, have we met,
And gently here have laid her,
Though winter is no time to get
The flowers that should o'erspread her.

We should bring pansies quick with spring,
Rose, violet, daffodilly,
And also, above every thing,
White lilies for our Lily.

Nay, more than flowers, this grave exacts—
Glad, grateful attestations
Of her sweet eyes and pretty acts,
With calm renunciations.

Her very mother with light feet
Should leave the place too earthly,
Saying, "The angels have thee, Sweet,
Because we are not worthy."

But winter kills the orange-buds,
The gardens in the frost are,
And all the heart dissolves in floods,
Remember we have lost her!

Poor earth, poor heart—too weak, too weak,
To miss the July shining!
Poor heart!—what bitter words we speak,
When God speaks of resigning!

Sustain this heart in us that faints,
Thou God, the self-existent!
We catch up wild at parting saints,
And feel thy heaven too distant.

The wind that swept them out of sin,
Has ruffled all our vesture.
On the shut door that let them in,
We beat with frantic gesture—

Digitized by Google

To us, us also—open straight!
The outer life is chilly—
Are *we* too, like the earth, to wait
Till next year for our Lily?

—Oh, my own baby on my knees,
My leaping, dimpled treasure,
At every word I write like these,
Clasped close, with stronger pressure!

Too well my own heart understands—
At every word beats fuller—
—My little feet, my little hands,
And hair of Lily's color!

—But God gives patience, Love learns strength,
And Faith remembers promise,
And Hope itself can smile at length
On other hopes gone from us.

Love, strong as Death, shall conquer Death,
Through struggle, made more glorious.
This mother stills her sobbing breath,
Renouncing, yet victorious.

Arms empty of her child, she lifts,
With spirit unbereaven—
"God will not take back all his gifts;
My Lily's mine in heaven!

"Still mine! maternal rights serene
Not given to another!
The crystal bars shine faint between
The souls of child and mother.

"Meanwhile," the mother cries, "content!
Our love was well divided.
Its sweetness following where she went,
Its anguish stayed where I did.

"Well done of God, to halve the lot,
And give her all the sweetness;
To us, the empty room and cot—
To her, the heaven's completeness.

"To us, this grave—to her, the rows
The mystic palm-trees spring in.
To us, the silence in the house—
To her, the choral singing.

"For her, to gladden in God's view—
For us, to hope and bear on!—
Grow, Lily, in thy garden new,
Beside the rose of Sharon.

"Grow fast in heaven, sweet Lily clipped,
In love more calm than this is—
And may the angels dewy-lipped
Remind thee of our kisses!

"While none shall tell thee of our tears,
These human tears now falling,
Till, after a few patient years,
One home shall take us all in.

"Child, father, mother—who left out?
Not mother, and not father!—
And when, our dying couch about,
The natural mists shall gather,

"Some smiling angel close shall stand
In old Correggio's fashion,
And bear a LILY in his hand,
For death's ANNUNCIATION."

THE DEAD PAN.

Excited by Schiller's "Götter Griechenlands," and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ("De Oraculorum Defectu"), according to which at the hour of the Saviour's agony a cry of "Great Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners—and the oracles ceased.

GODS of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken,
In old Æthiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses
Where the silver spheres roll on,
Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun?—
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,"
Said the old Hellenic tongue!
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung!
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay—
Since Pan is dead?

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
All alone, O Naiades,
While your drenched locks dry slow in
This cold feeble sun and breeze?—
Not a word the Naiads say,
Though the rivers run for aye,
For Pan is dead.

From the gloaming of the oak-wood,
O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
At the rushing thunderstroke, would
No sob tremble through the tree?—
Not a word the Dryads say,
Though the forests wave for aye,
For Pan is dead.

Digitized by Google

Have ye left the mountain-places,
Oreads wild, for other tryst?
Shall we see no sudden faces
Strike a glory through the mist?
Not a sound the silence thrills
Of the everlasting hills.
Pan, Pan is dead.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision,
Crowned to starry wanderings—
With your chariots in procession,
And your silver clash of wings!
Very pale ye seem to rise,
Ghosts of Grecian deities—
Now Pan is dead!

Jove, that right hand is unloaded,
Whence the thunder did prevail,
While in idiocy of godhead
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold.
Pan, Pan is dead.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee,
On thy dim, straight, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo! floats his golden
Hair all mist-like where he stands;
While the Muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe lookèd lost as thou!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,
Pallas' broad blue eyes eclipse,
And no hero take inspiring
From the god-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons—bound with his own vines.
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly,
"Evohe—ah—evohe—!"
Ah, Pan is dead!

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone;
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun.
Ceres smileth stern thereat,
"We *all* now are desolate—
Now Pan is dead."

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thine heart!
Ai Adonis! at that shriek,
Not a tear runs down her cheek—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the Loves, we used to know from
One another, huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly—
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.
Pan, Pan is dead.

What, and Hermes? Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus—
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay, Pan is dead.

Crownèd Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head.
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed.
Scornful children are not mute—
"Mother, mother, walk a-foot—
Since Pan is dead."

In the fiery-hearted centre
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta—who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy gray chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!
For Pan is dead.

Gods, we vainly do adjure you—
Ye return nor voice nor sign!
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine!
Not a grave, to show thereby,
Here these gray old gods do lie.
Pan, Pan is dead.

Even that Greece who took your wages,
Calls the obolus outworn.
And the hoarse, deep-throated ages
Laugh your godships unto scorn.
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow colder if they name you—
And Pan is dead.

Gods bereavèd, gods belated,
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top—
Now, Pan is dead.

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind,
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
From the pilèd Dark behind;
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the rowers from the benches
Fell—each shuddering on his face—
While departing influences
Struck a cold back through the place;
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep—
"Pan, Pan is dead."

Digitized by Google

And that dismal cry rose slowly
And sank slowly through the air,
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said—
PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—
PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
Hung for love's sake on a cross;
When his brow was chill with dying,
And His soul was faint with loss;
When His priestly blood dropped downward,
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—
Then, Pan was dead.

By the love he stood alone in,
His sole Godhead rose complete,
And the false gods fell down moaning,
Each from off his golden seat;
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity—
Pan, Pan is dead.

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine!
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine;
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only,
Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered—feeling o'er her,
Her lost god's forsaking look.
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,
And her crispy fillets shook,
And her lips gasped through their foam,
For a word that did not come.
Pan, Pan was dead.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice,
Whence libations ran of yore.
See, the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike—as your glories must,
Since Pan is dead.

Get to dust, as common mortals,
By a common doom and track!
Let no Schiller from the portals
Of that Hades, call you back,
Or instruct us to weep all
At your antique funeral.
Pan, Pan is dead.

By your beauty, which confesses
Some chief Beauty conquering you—
By our grand heroic guesses,
Through your falsehood, at the True—
We will weep *not* . . . / earth shall roll
Heir to each god's aureole—
And Pan is dead.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth;
And those debonaire romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phœbus' chariot-course is run.
Look up, poets, to the sun!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessèd mysteries;
And a Priest's hand, through creation,
Waveth calm and consecration—
And Pan is dead.

Truth is fair: should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is his song.
Sing his truth out fair and full,
And secure his beautiful.
Let Pan be dead.

Truth is large. Our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame, to stand in His creation,
And doubt truth's sufficiency!—
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling—
When Pan is dead.

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure—
All of praise that hath admonished,
All of virtue, shall endure—
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses,
Ere Pan was dead.

O brave poets, keep back nothing,
Nor mix falsehood with the whole.
Look up Godward; speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul!
Hold, in high poetic duty,
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty.
Pan, Pan is dead.

COWPER'S GRAVE.

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying.
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying.
Yet let the grief and humbleness, as low as silence, languish.
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,

Digitized by Google

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration.
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him—
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven hath won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to His own love to blind him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him,

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences.
The pulse of dew upon the grass, kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tenderness.
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while frenzy desolated— [created.
Nor man nor Nature satisfy whom only God

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses—
That turns his fevered eyes around — "My mother! where's my mother?"
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other!—

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unweary love she bore him!—
Thus, woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes, which closed in death to save him.

Thus? oh, not *thus!* no type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew—"*My* Saviour! *not* deserted!"

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face, no love was manifested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops averted?
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one* should be deserted?

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather;
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and Father.
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!
That earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition,
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision.

FELICIA HEMANS.

TO L. E. L., REFERRING TO HER MONODY ON THE POETESS.

Thou bay-crowned living One that o'er the bay-crowned Dead art bowing,
And o'er the shadeless moveless brow the vital shadow throwing,
And o'er the sighless songless lips the wail and music wedding,
And dropping o'er the tranquil eyes, the tears not of their shedding!—

Take music from the silent Dead, whose meaning is completer,
Reserve thy tears for living brows, where all such tears are meeter,
And leave the violets in the grass to brighten where thou treadest!
No flowers for her! no need of flowers—albeit "bring flowers," thou saidest.

Yes, flowers, to crown the "cup and lute!" since both may come to breaking.
Or flowers, to greet the "bride!" the heart's own beating works its aching.
Or flowers, to soothe the "captive's" sight, from earth's free bosom gathered,
Reminding of his earthly hope, then withering as it withered.

But bring not near the solemn corse, a type of human seeming.
Lay only dust's stern verity upon the dust undreaming.
And while the calm perpetual stars shall look upon it solely,
Her spherèd soul shall look on *them*, with eyes more bright and holy.

Digitized by Google

Nor mourn, O living One, because her part in life was mourning.
Would she have lost the poet's fire for anguish of the burning?
The minstrel harp, for the strained string? the tripod, for the afflated
Woe? or the vision, for those tears in which it shone dilated?

Perhaps she shuddered while the world's cold hand her brow was wreathing,
But never wronged that mystic breath which breathed in all her breathing,
Which drew from rocky earth and man, abstractions high and moving,
Beauty, if not the beautiful, and love, if not the loving.

Such visionings have paled in sight; the Saviour she descrieth,
And little recks *who* wreathed the brow which on His bosom lieth.
The whiteness of His innocence o'er all her garments flowing,
There, learneth she the sweet "new song," she will not mourn in knowing.

Be happy, crowned and living One! and, as thy dust decayeth,
May thine own England say for thee, what now for Her it sayeth—
"Albeit softly in our ears her silver song was ringing, [her singing!"
The foot-fall of her parting soul is softer than

L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTION.

"Do you think of me as I think of you?"
From her poem written during the voyage to the Cape

"Do you think of me as I think of you,
My friends, my friends?"—She said it from the sea,
The English minstrel in her minstrelsy,
While, under brighter skies than erst she knew,
Her heart grew dark, and groped there, as the blind,
To reach across the waves friends left behind—
"Do you think of me as I think of you?"

It seemed not much to ask—as *I* of *you?*
We all do ask the same. No eyelids cover
Within the meekest eyes, that question over.
And little in the world the Loving do
But sit (among the rocks?) and listen for
The echo of their own love evermore—
"Do you think of me as I think of you?"

Love-learnèd she had sung of love and love—
And like a child that, sleeping with dropped head
Upon the fairy-book he lately read,
Whatever household noises round him move,
Hears in his dream some elfin turbulence—
Even so, suggestive to her inward sense,
All sounds of life assumed one tune of love.

And when the glory of her dream withdrew,
When knightly gestes and courtly pageantries
Were broken in her visionary eyes
By tears the solemn seas attested true—
Forgetting that sweet lute beside her hand
She asked not—Do you praise me, O my land?—
But—"Think ye of me, friends, as I of you?"

Hers was the hand that played for many a year
Love's silver phrase for England—smooth and well.
Would God, her heart's more inward oracle
In that lone moment might confirm her dear!
For when her questioned friends in agony
Made passionate response, "We think of thee,"
Her place was in the dust, too deep to hear.

Could she not wait to catch their answering breath?
Was she content, content, with ocean's sound,
Which dashed its mocking infinite around
One thirsty for a little love?—beneath
Those stars content, where last her song had gone—
They mute and cold in radiant life—as soon
Their singer was to be, in darksome death?*

Bring your vain answers—cry, "We think of thee!"
How think ye of her? warm in long ago
Delights?—or crowned with budding bays? Not so.
None smiled and none are crowned where lieth she,
With all her visions unfulfilled save one,
Her childhood's—of the palm-trees in the sun—
And lo! their shadow on her sepulchre!

"Do ye think of me as I think of you?"—
O friends, O kindred, O dear brotherhood
Of all the world! what are we, that we should
For covenants of long affection sue?
Why press so near each other when the touch
Is barred by graves? Not much, and yet too much,
Is this "Think of me as I think of you."

But while on mortal lips I shape anew
A sigh to mortal issues—verily
Above the unshaken stars that see us die,
A vocal pathos rolls; and He who drew
All life from dust, and for all, tasted death,
By death and life and love, appealing, saith,
"*Do you think of me as I think of you?*"

THE SLEEP.

"He giveth His beloved sleep."—*Psalm* cxxvii. 2.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
"He giveth His beloved, sleep!"

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart, to be unmoved,

* Her lyric on the polar star came home with her latest papers.

Digitized by Google

The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep,
The patriot's voice, to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown, to light the brows?—
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake.
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep.
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvèd gold, the wailers heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His beloved, sleep.

His dews drop mutely on the hill;
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap.
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Confirmed in such a rest to keep;
But angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is *heard*—
"He giveth His beloved, sleep.

For me, my heart that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on His love repose,
Who giveth His beloved, sleep.

And, friends, dear friends—when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let One, most loving of you all,
Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall;
He giveth His beloved, sleep."

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

"Φεῦ, Φεῦ, τι πρασδερκεσθε μ' ομμασιν, τεκνα."
MEDEA.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago.
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;
For the outside earth is cold;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her.
Was no room for any work in the close clay!
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries.
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes.
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime!
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have.
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do.
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

Digitized by Google

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap.
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning—
Their wind comes in our faces—
Till our hearts turn—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals.
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessèd One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer: "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheel is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door.
Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.*
We know no other words, except 'Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within his right hand which is strong.
'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone.
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children—"up in heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by his world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run.
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory,
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without his wisdom.
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity!—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

* A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Horne's report of his commission. The name of the poet of "Orion" and "Cosmo de' Medici" has, however, a change of associations, and comes in time to remind me that we have some noble poetic heat of literature still—however open to the reproach of being somewhat gelid in our humanity.—1844.

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river?

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river.

Digitized by Google

The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river,
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
Then notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes as he sate by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,
(Laughed while he sate by the river!)
"The only way since gods began
To make sweet music they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan,
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan
To laugh, as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man.
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain—
For the reed that grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

CONFESSIONS.

Face to face in my chamber, my silent chamber,
I saw her.
God and she and I only, . . . there, I sate down to draw her
Soul through the clefts of confession. . . . Speak,
I am holding thee fast,
As the angels of resurrection shall do it at the last.
"My cup is blood-red
With my sin," she said,
"And I pour it out to the bitter lees,
As if the angels of judgment stood over me strong at last,
Or as thou wert as these!"

When God smote His hands together, and struck out thy soul as a spark
Into the organized glory of things, from deeps of the dark—
Say, didst thou shine, didst thou burn, didst thou honor the power in the form,
As the star does at night, or the fire-fly, or even the little ground-worm?
"I have sinned," she said,
"For my seed-light shed
Has smouldered away from His first decrees!
The cypress praiseth the fire-fly, the ground-leaf praiseth the worm—
I am viler than these!"

When God on that sin had pity, and did not trample thee straight
With His wild rains beating and drenching thy light found inadequate;
When He only sent thee the north-winds, a little searching and chill,
To quicken thy flame . . . didst thou kindle and flash to the heights of His will?
"I have sinned," she said,
"Unquickened, unspread [knees!
My fire dropped down, and I wept on my
I only said of His winds of the north as I shrank from their chill, ...
What delight is in these?"

When God on that sin had pity, and did not meet it as such,
But tempered the wind to thy uses, and softened the world to thy touch,
At least thou wast moved in thy soul, though unable to prove it afar,
Thou couldst carry thy light like a jewel, not giving it out like a star?
"I have sinned," she said,
"And not merited
The gift He gives, by the grace He sees!
The mine-cave praiseth the jewel, the hill-side praiseth the star;
I am viler than these."

Then I cried aloud in my passion, . . . Unthankful and impotent creature,
To throw up thy scorn unto God through the rents in thy beggarly nature!
If He, the all-giving and loving, is served so unduly, what then
Hast thou done to the weak and the false, and the changing, . . . thy fellows of men?
"I have *loved*," she said,
(Words bowing her head
As the wind the wet acacia-trees!)
"I saw God sitting above me—but I . . . I sate among men,
And I have loved these."

Again with a lifted voice, like a choral trumpet that takes
The lowest note of a viol that trembles and triumphing breaks
On the air with it solemn and clear—"Behold!
I have sinned not in this!
Where I loved, I have loved much and well—I have verily loved not amiss.
Let the living," she said,
"Inquire of the Dead,
In the house of the pale-fronted Images:
My own true dead will answer for me, that I have not loved amiss
In my love for all these.

"The least touch of their hands in the morning,
I keep it by day and by night.
Their least step on the stair, at the door, still throbs through me, if ever so light.

Digitized by Google

Their least gift, which they left to my childhood,
far off, in the long-ago years,
Is now turned from a toy to a relic, and seen
through the crystals of tears.
Dig the snow," she said,
"For my church-yard bed,
Yet I, as I sleep, shall not fear to freeze,
If one only of these my belovèds, shall love me
with heart-warm tears,
As I have loved these!

"If I angered any among them, from thenceforth
my own life was sore.
If I fell by chance from their presence, I clung
to their memory more.
Their tender I often felt holy, their bitter I some-
times called sweet;
And whenever their heart has refused me, I fell
down straight at their feet.
I have loved," she said—
"Man is weak, God is dread, [ease,
Yet the weak man dies with his spirit at
Having poured such an unguent of love but once
on the Saviour's feet,
As I lavished for these."

Go, I cried, thou hast chosen the Human, and
left the Divine!
Then, at least, have the Human shared with thee
their wild-berry wine?
Have they loved back thy love, and when stran-
gers approached thee with blame,
Have they covered thy fault with their kisses,
and loved thee the same?
But she shrunk and said,
"God, over my head [ment seas,
Must sweep in the wrath of his judg-
If *He* shall deal with me sinning, but only indeed
the same
And no gentler than these."

THE LADY'S YES.

"Yes," I answered you last night;
"No," this morning, sir, I say.
Colors seen by candle-light
Will not look the same by day.

When the viols played their best,
Lamps above, and laughs below,
Love me sounded like a jest,
Fit for *yes* or fit for *no*.

Call me false or call me free—
Vow, whatever light may shine,
No man on your face shall see
Any grief, for change on mine.

Yet the sin is on us both;
Time to dance is not to woo;
Wooing light makes fickle troth,
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*.

Learn to win a lady's faith
Nobly, as the thing is high,
Bravely, as for life and death—
With a loyal gravity.

Lead her from the festive boards,
Point her to the starry skies,
Guard her, by your truthful words,
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

By your truth she shall be true,
Ever true as wives of yore;
And her *yes*, once said to you,
Shall be Yes for evermore.

TO BETTINE,

THE CHILD-FRIEND OF GOETHE.

"I have the second-sight, Goethe!"—*Letters of a Child.*

Bettine, friend of Goethe,
Hadst thou the second-sight—
Upturning worship and delight
With such a loving duty
To his grand face, as women will,
The childhood 'neath thine eyelids still?

Before his shrine to doom thee
Using the same child's smile
That heaven and earth, beheld erewhile
For the first time, won from thee,
Ere star and flower grew dim and dead,
Save at his feet and o'er his head?

Digging thine heart and throwing
Away its childhood's gold,
That so its woman-depth might hold
His spirit's overflowing.
For surging souls, no worlds can bound,
Their channel in the heart have found.

O child, to change appointed,
Thou hadst not second-sight!
What eyes the future view aright,
Unless by tears anointed?
Yea, only tears themselves can show
The burning ones that have to flow.

O woman, deeply loving,
Thou hadst not second-sight!
The star is very high and bright,
And none can see it moving.
Love looks around, below, above,
Yet all his prophecy is—love.

The bird thy childhood's playing
Sent onward o'er the sea,
Thy dove of hope came back to thee
Without a leaf. Art laying
Its wet cold wing no sun can dry,
Still in thy bosom secretly?

Our Goethe's friend, Bettine,
I have the second-sight!
The stone upon his grave is white,
The funeral-stone between ye;
And in thy mirror thou hast viewed
Some change as hardly understood.

Where's childhood? where is Goethe?
The tears are in thine eyes.
Nay, thou shalt yet reorganize
Thy maidenhood of beauty

Digitized by Google

In his own glory, which is smooth
Of wrinkles and sublime in youth.

The poet's arms have wound thee,
He breathes upon thy brow,
He lifts thee upward in the glow
Of his great genius round thee—
The childlike poet undefiled
Preserving evermore THE CHILD.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

So the dreams depart,
So the fading phantoms flee,
And the sharp reality
Now must act its part.
WESTWOOD'S *Beads from a Rosary.*

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
'Mid the beeches of a meadow,
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow,
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow.
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses,
Fills the silence like a speech,
While she thinks what shall be done—
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses . . . "I will have a lover,
Riding on a steed of steeds!
He shall love me without guile,
And to *him* I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath.
And the lute he plays upon,
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

"And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face.
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace.'

"Then, ay, then—he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand—
Till I answer, 'Rise and go!
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, 'Farewell,'
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day.'

"Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?'

"And the first time, I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon—
And the second time a glove;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run—
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son!
Thousand serfs do call me master—
But, O Love, I love but *thee!*'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds;
And, when soul-tied by one troth
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gaily,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
And went homeward, round a mile
Just to see as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding up the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads—
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.
Lo, the wild-swan had deserted—
And a rat had gnawed the reeds.

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not! but I know
She could never show him—never
That swan's nest among the reeds!

Digitized by Google

JOHN STERLING.

JOHN STERLING was born in Kaimes Castle, Isle of Bute, July 20, 1806. He graduated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was noted as a debater. Among his intimates there, who afterward became celebrated, were Richard Chenevix Trench, Frederick D. Maurice, and Richard Monckton Milnes. For a short time, about 1828, Sterling and Maurice were editors and proprietors of the London *Athenæum*. Sterling wrote a novel entitled "Arthur Coningsby," which was published in 1833. In 1830 he married, and with his wife went to the West Indies, where they remained over a year on a sugar plantation. Returning to England, he took orders and became curate of Hurstmonceaux, Sussex, of which parish J. C. Hare was rector. But in less than a year ill-health obliged him to leave the ministry, and he went to London and devoted himself to literature. He subsequently travelled in France and Italy, and spent some time in Madeira, and finally settled at Falmouth.

In 1839 he published a volume of short poems, in 1841 a long poem entitled "The Election," and in 1843 "Strafford," a drama. In the last-named year he removed to the Isle of Wight, where he began a poem entitled "Cœur de Lion," which he left unfinished. He died at Ventnor, Isle of Wight, on September 18, 1844. A collection of his essays and tales, contributed to periodicals, was published in two volumes in 1848. In 1851 twelve of his letters were published, and in the same year appeared Carlyle's "Life of Sterling."

THE SPICE-TREE.

THE Spice-Tree lives in the garden green;
Beside it the fountain flows;
And a fair bird sits the boughs between,
And sings his melodious woes.

No greener garden e'er was known
Within the bounds of an earthly king;
No lovelier skies have ever shone
Than those that illumine its constant spring.

That coil-bound stem has branches three;
On each a thousand blossoms grow;
And, old as aught of time can be,
The root stands fast in the rocks below.

In the spicy shade ne'er seems to tire
The fount that builds a silvery dome;
And flakes of purple and ruby fire
Gush out, and sparkle amid the foam.

The fair white bird of flaming crest,
And azure wings bedropped with gold,
Ne'er has he known a pause of rest,
But sings the lament that he framed of old:

"O Princess bright! how long the night
Since thou art sunk in the waters clear!
How sadly they flow from the depth below—
How long must I sing and thou wilt not hear?

"The waters play, and the flowers are gay,
And the skies are sunny above;
I would that all could fade and fall,
And I, too, cease to mourn my love.

"Oh! many a year, so wakeful and drear,
I have sorrowed and watched, beloved, for thee!
But there comes no breath from the chambers of death,
While the lifeless fount gushes under the tree."

The skies grow dark, and they glare with red;
The tree shakes off its spicy bloom;
The waves of the fount in a black pool spread;
And in thunder sounds the garden's doom.

Down springs the bird with a long shrill cry,
Into the sable and angry flood;
And the face of the pool, as he falls from high,
Curdles in circling stains of blood.

But sudden again upswells the fount;
Higher and higher the waters flow—
In a glittering diamond arch they mount,
And round it the colors of morning glow.

Finer and finer the watery mound
Softens and melts to a thin-spun veil,
And tones of music circle around,
And bear to the stars the fountain's tale.

And swift the eddying rainbow screen
Falls in dew on the grassy floor;
Under the Spice-Tree the garden's Queen
Sits by her lover, who wails no more.

Digitized by Google

THE ROSE AND THE GAUNTLET.

Low spake the knight to the peasant-girl:
"I tell thee sooth, I am belted earl;
Fly with me from this garden small,
And thou shalt sit in my castle's hall;

"Thou shalt have pomp, and wealth, and pleasure,
Joys beyond thy fancy's measure;
Here with my sword and horse I stand,
To bear thee away to my distant land.

"Take, thou fairest! this full-blown rose,
A token of love that as ripely blows."
With his glove of steel he plucked the token,
But it fell from his gauntlet crushed and broken.

The maiden exclaimed: "Thou seest, Sir Knight,
Thy fingers of iron can only smite;
And, like the rose thou hast torn and scattered,
I in thy grasp should be wrecked and shattered."

She trembled and blushed, and her glances fell;
But she turned from the knight, and said, "Farewell!"
"Not so," he cried, "will I lose my prize;
I heed not thy words, but I read thine eyes."

He lifted her up in his grasp of steel,
And he mounted and spurred with furious heel;
But her cry drew forth her hoary sire,
Who snatched his bow from above the fire.

Swift from the valley the warrior fled,
Swifter the bolt of the cross-bow sped;
And the weight that pressed on the fleet-foot horse
Was the living man, and the woman's corse!

That morning the rose was bright of hue;
That morning the maiden was fair to view;
But the evening sun its beauty shed
On the withered leaves, and the maiden dead.

TO A CHILD.

Dear child! whom sleep can hardly tame,
As live and beautiful as flame,
Thou glancest round my graver hours
As if thy crown of wild-wood flowers
Were not by mortal forehead worn,
But on the summer breeze were borne,
Or on a mountain streamlet's waves
Came glistening down from dreamy caves.

With bright round cheek, amid whose glow
Delight and wonder come and go;
And eyes whose inward meanings play,
Congenial with the light of day;
And brow so calm, a home for Thought
Before he knows his dwelling wrought;
Though wise indeed thou seemest not,
Thou brightenest well the wise man's lot.

That shout proclaims the undoubting mind;
That laughter leaves no ache behind;
And in thy look and dance of glee,
Unforced, unthought of, simply free,
How weak the schoolman's formal art
Thy soul and body's bliss to part!
I hail thee Childhood's very Lord,
In gaze and glance, in voice and word.

In spite of all foreboding fear,
A thing thou art of present cheer;
And thus to be beloved and known,
As is a rushy fountain's tone,
As is the forest's leafy shade,
Or blackbird's hidden serenade.
Thou art a flash that lights the whole—
A gush from Nature's vernal soul.

And yet, dear child! within thee lives
A power that deeper feeling gives,
That makes thee more than light or air,
Than all things sweet and all things fair;
And sweet and fair as aught may be,
Diviner life belongs to thee,
For 'mid thine aimless joys began
The perfect heart and will of Man.

Thus what thou art foreshows to me
How greater far thou soon shalt be;
And while amid thy garlands blow
The winds that warbling come and go,
Ever within, not loud but clear,
Prophetic murmur fills the ear,
And says that every human birth
Anew discloses God to earth.

SHAKESPEARE.

How little fades from earth when sink to rest
The hours and cares that move a great man's breast!
Though naught of all we saw the grave may spare,
His life pervades the world's impregnate air;
Though Shakespeare's dust beneath our footsteps lies,
His spirit breathes amid his native skies;
With meaning won from him forever glows
Each air that England feels, and star it knows;
His whispered words from many a mother's voice
Can make her sleeping child in dreams rejoice;
And gleams from spheres he first conjoined to earth
Are blent with rays of each new morning's birth.
Amid the sights and tales of common things,
Leaf, flower, and bird, and wars, and deaths of kings—
Of shore, and sea, and Nature's daily round,
Of life that tills, and tombs that load, the ground,
His visions mingle, swell, command, pace by,
And haunt with living presence heart and eye;
And tones from him, by other bosoms caught,
Awaken flush and stir of mounting thought;
And the long sigh, and deep impassioned thrill,
Rouse custom's trance and spur the faltering will.

Digitized by Google

Above the goodly land, more his than ours,
He sits supreme, enthroned in skyey towers;
And sees the heroic brood of his creation
Teach larger life to his ennobled nation.
O shaping brain! O flashing fancy's hues!
O boundless heart, kept fresh by pity's dews!
O wit humane and blithe! O sense sublime!
For each dim oracle of mantled time!
Transcendent form of man! in whom we read
Mankind's whole tale of impulse, thought, and deed!
Amid the expanse of years, beholding thee,
We know how vast our world of life may be;
Wherein, perchance, with aims as pure as thine,
Small tasks and strengths may be no less divine.

THE TWO OCEANS.

Two seas, amid the night,
In the moonshine roll and sparkle—
Now spread in the silver light,
Now sadden, and wail, and darkle:
The one has a billowy motion,
And from land to land it gleams;
The other is sleep's wide ocean,
And its glimmering waves are dreams:
The one, with murmur and roar,
Bears fleets around coast and islet;
The other, without a shore,
Ne'er knew the track of a pilot.

ON A BEAUTIFUL DAY.

O UNSEEN Spirit! now a calm divine
Comes forth from thee, rejoicing earth and air!
Trees, hills, and houses, all distinctly shine,
And thy great ocean slumbers everywhere.

The mountain-ridge against the purple sky
Stands clear and strong, with darkened rocks and dells,
And cloudless brightness opens wide and high
A home aërial, where thy presence dwells.

The chime of bells remote, the murmuring sea,
The song of birds in whispering copse and wood,
The distant voice of children's thoughtless glee,
And maiden's song, are all one voice of good.

Amid the leaves' green mass a sunny play
Of flash and shadow stirs like inward life;
The ship's white sail glides onward far away,
Unhaunted by a dream of storm or strife.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

EARTH, of man the bounteous mother,
Feeds him still with corn and wine;
He who best would aid a brother
Shares with him these gifts divine.

Many a power within her bosom,
Noiseless, hidden, works beneath;
Hence are seed and leaf and blossom,
Golden ear, and clustered wreath.

These to swell with strength and beauty
Is the royal task of man;
Man's a king; his throne is duty,
Since his work on earth began.

Bud and harvest, bloom and vintage—
These, like man, are fruits of earth;
Stamped in clay, a heavenly mintage,
All from dust receive their birth.

Barn and mill, and wine-vat's treasures,
Earthly goods for earthly lives—
These are Nature's ancient pleasures,
These her child from her derives.

What the dream but vain rebelling,
If from earth we sought to flee?
'Tis our stored and ample dwelling;
'Tis from it the skies we see.

Wind and frost, and hour and season,
Land and water, sun and shade,
Work with these, as bids thy reason,
For they work thy toil to aid.

Sow thy seed and reap in gladness!
Man himself is all a seed;
Hope and hardship, joy and sadness,
Slow the plant to ripeness lead.

Digitized by Google

CAROLINE NORTON.

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH SHERIDAN was born in London in 1808. She is the daughter of Thomas and the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Her father died when she was a child, and her mother superintended her education, which was unusually wide. In 1827 she was married to Hon. George Chappel Norton, who had asked for her hand three years before. Meanwhile an accepted lover had died. She bore her husband three sons. But after a few years some baseless scandal connecting her with Lord Melbourne, whom she first met in 1831, led to a suit brought by Mr. Norton against Melbourne. The result was a triumphant verdict, on the part of the public as well as the jury, for the defendant. Mrs. Norton and her husband have not since lived together. She is said to have been as beautiful as she is accomplished. She began writing verses in childhood, but was not encouraged by her mother. It is said that with her sister, who married Hon. Price Blackwood, she produced two little books of pictures and verses when they were twelve years of age. Mrs. Norton has published several novels, besides her successive volumes of poetry. Her most popular poem is "Bingen on the Rhine." "The King of Denmark's Ride" has been a favorite with dramatic readers, and "The Arab to his Steed" with schoolboys. "We have been Friends together" is popular as a song.

BINGEN ON THE RHINE.

A SOLDIER of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;
But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood ebbed away,
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he might say.
The dying soldier faltered, and he took that comrade's hand,
And he said: "I nevermore shall see my own, my native land;
Take a message, and a token, to some distant friends of mine,
For I was born at Bingen—at Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet and crowd around,
To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard-ground,
That we fought the battle bravely; and when the day was done,
Full many a corse lay ghastly pale beneath the setting sun;
And, 'mid the dead and dying, were some grown old in wars—
The death-wound on their gallant breasts, the last of many scars;
And some were young, and suddenly beheld life's morn decline—
And one had come from Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my mother that her other son shall comfort her old age;
For I was still a truant bird, that thought his home a cage.
For my father was a soldier, and even as a child
My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles fierce and wild;
And when he died and left us to divide his scanty hoard,
I let them take whate'er they would—but kept my father's sword;
And with boyish love I hung it where the bright light used to shine,
On the cottage wall at Bingen—calm Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my sister not to weep for me and sob with drooping head,
When the troops come marching home again with glad and gallant tread,
But to look upon them proudly, with a calm and steadfast eye,
For her brother was a soldier too, and not afraid to die:
And if a comrade seek her love, I ask her in my name
To listen to him kindly, without regret or shame,
And to hang the old sword in its place (my father's sword and mine)
For the honor of old Bingen—dear Bingen on the Rhine.

"There's another—not a sister; in the happy days gone by
You'd have known her by the merriment that sparkled in her eye;

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INE NORTON.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Caroline Elizt. S. Norton

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Too innocent for coquetry—too fond for idle scorning—
O friend! I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes heaviest mourning!
Tell her the last night of my life (for, ere the moon be risen,
My body will be out of pain, my soul be out of prison)
I dreamed I stood with *her*, and saw the yellow sunlight shine
On the vine-clad hills of Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine.

"I saw the blue Rhine sweep along—I heard, or seemed to hear,
The German songs we used to sing, in chorus sweet and clear;
And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting hill,
The echoing chorus sounded, through the evening calm and still;
And her glad blue eyes were on me, as we passed, with friendly talk,
Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-remembered walk!
And her little hand lay lightly, confidingly in mine—
But we'll meet no more at Bingen—loved Bingen on the Rhine."

His trembling voice grew faint and hoarse—his grasp was childish weak—
His eyes put on a dying look—he sighed and ceased to speak;
His comrade bent to lift him, but the spark of life had fled—
The soldier of the Legion in a foreign land is dead!
And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she looked down
On the red sand of the battle-field, with bloody corses strewn;
Yes, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light seemed to shine,
As it shone on distant Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine.

THE KING OF DENMARK'S RIDE.

Word was brought to the Danish King
(Hurry!)
That the love of his heart lay suffering,
And pined for the comfort his voice would bring.
(Oh, ride as though you were flying!)
Better he loves each golden curl
On the brow of that Scandinavian girl
Than his rich crown jewels of ruby and pearl;
And his rose of the isles is dying!

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
(Hurry!)
Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
(Oh, ride as though you were flying!)
Spurs were struck in the foaming flank;
Worn-out chargers staggered and sank;
Bridles were slackened, and girths were burst;
But ride as they would, the king rode first,
For his rose of the isles lay dying!

His nobles are beaten, one by one;
(Hurry!)
They have fainted and faltered and homeward gone;
His little fair page now follows alone,
For strength and for courage trying!
The king looked back at that faithful child;
Wan was the face that answering smiled;
They passed the drawbridge with clattering din,
Then he dropped; and only the king rode in
Where his rose of the isles lay dying!

The king blew a blast on his bugle-horn;
(Silence!)
No answer came; but faint and forlorn
An echo returned on the cold gray morn,
Like the breath of a spirit sighing;
The castle portal stood grimly wide;
None welcomed the king from that weary ride;
For dead, in the light of the dawning day,
The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay
Who had yearned for his voice while dying!

The panting steed, with a drooping crest,
Stood weary,
The king returned from her chamber of rest,
The thick sobs choking in his breast;
And, that dumb companion eying,
The tears gushed forth which he strove to check;
He bowed his head on his charger's neck:
"O steed, that every nerve did strain—
Dear steed, our ride hath been in vain,
To the halls where my love lay dying!"

LOVE NOT.

Love not, love not! ye hapless sons of clay!
Hope's gayest wreaths are made of earthly flowers—
Things that are made to fade and fall away
Ere they have blossomed for a few short hours.
Love not!

Love not! the thing ye love may change;
The rosy lip may cease to smile on you,
The kindly-beaming eye grow cold and strange,
The heart still warmly beat, yet not be true.
Love not!

Love not! the thing you love may die—
May perish from the gay and gladsome earth;
The silent stars, the blue and smiling sky,
Beam o'er its grave, as once upon its birth.
Love not!

Love not! O warning vainly said
In present hours as in years gone by!
Love flings a halo round the dear ones' head,
Faultless, immortal, till they change or die.
Love not!

Digitized by Google

THE DREAM.

'Twas summer eve; the changeful beams still play'd
On the fir-bark and through the beechen shade;
Still with soft crimson glow'd each floating cloud;
Still the stream glitter'd where the willow bow'd;
Still the pale moon sate silent and alone,
Nor yet the stars had rallied round her throne;
Those diamond courtiers, who, while yet the West
Wears the red shield above his dying breast,
Dare not assume the loss they all desire,
Nor pay their homage to the fainter fire,
But wait in trembling till the Sun's fair light,
Fading, shall leave them free to welcome Night!

So when some chief, whose name through realms afar
Was still the watchword of successful war,
Met by the fatal hour which waits for all,
Is, on the field he rallied, forced to fall,
The conquerors pause to watch his parting breath,
Awed by the terrors of that mighty death;
Nor dare the meed of victory to claim,
Nor lift the standard to a meaner name,
Till every spark of soul hath ebb'd away,
And leaves what was a hero, common clay.

Oh! twilight! spirit that dost render birth
To dim enchantments; melting Heaven with Earth,
Leaving on craggy hills and running streams
A softness like the atmosphere of dreams;
Thy hour to all is welcome! Faint and sweet
Thy light falls round the peasant's homeward feet,
Who, slow returning from his task of toil,
Sees the low sunset gild the cultured soil,
And, tho' such radiance round him brightly glows,
Marks the small spark his cottage window throws.
Still as his heart forestals his weary pace,
Fondly he dreams of each familiar face,
Recalls the treasures of his narrow life,
His rosy children, and his sunburnt wife,
To whom *his* coming is the chief event
Of simple days in cheerful labour spent.
The rich man's chariot hath gone whirling past,
And those poor cottagers have only cast
One careless glance on all that show of pride,
Then to their tasks turn'd quietly aside;
But *him* they wait for, him they welcome home,
Fond sentinels look forth to see him come;
The fagot sent for when the fire grew dim,
The frugal meal prepared, are all for him;
For him the watching of that sturdy boy,
For him those smiles of tenderness and joy,
For him,—who plods his sauntering way along,
Whistling the fragment of some village song!

Dear art thou to the lover, thou sweet light,
Fair fleeting sister of the mournful night!
As in impatient hope he stands apart,
Companion'd only by his beating heart,
And with an eager fancy oft beholds
The vision of a white robe's fluttering folds
Flit through the grove, and gain the open mead,
True to the hour by loving hearts agreed!
At length she comes. The evening's holy grace
Mellows the glory of her radiant face;
The curtain of that daylight faint and pale
Hangs round her like the shrouding of a veil;
As, turning with a bashful timid thought,
From the dear welcome she herself hath sought,
Her shadowy profile drawn against the sky
Cheats, while it charms, his fond adoring eye.

Oh! dear to him, to all, since first the flowers
Of happy Eden's consecrated bowers
Heard the low breeze along the branches play,
And God's voice bless the cool hour of the day.
For though that glorious Paradise be lost,
Though earth by lighting storms be roughly cross'd,
Though the long curse demands the tax of sin,
And the day's sorrows with the day begin,
That hour, once sacred to God's presence, still
Keeps itself calmer from the touch of ill,
The holiest hour of Earth. *Then* toil doth cease—
Then from the yoke the oxen find release—
Then man rests pausing from his many cares,
And the world teems with children's sunset prayers!
Then innocent things seek out their natural rest,
The babe sinks slumbering on its mother's breast;
The birds beneath their leafy covering creep,
Yea, even the flowers fold up their buds in sleep;
And angels, floating by, on radiant wings,
Hear the low sounds the breeze of evening brings
Catch the sweet incense as it floats along,
The infant's prayer, the mother's cradle-song,
And bear the holy gifts to worlds afar,
As things too sacred for this fallen star.

At such an hour, on such a summer night,
Silent and calm in its transparent light,
A widow'd parent watch'd her slumbering child,
On whose young face the sixteenth summer smiled.
Fair was the face she watch'd! Nor less, because
Beauty's perfection seemed to make a pause,
And wait, on that smooth brow, some further touch,
Some spell from time,—the great magician,—such
As calls the closed bud out of hidden gloom,
And bids it wake to glory, light, and bloom.
Girlish as yet, but with the gentle grace
Of a young fawn in its low resting-place,
Her folded limbs were lying: from her hand
A group of wild flowers—Nature's brightest band,
Of all that laugh along the summer fields,
Of all the sunny hedge-row freely yields,
Of all that in the wild-wood darkly hide,
Or on the thyme-bank wave in breezy pride,—
Show'd that the weariness which closed in sleep
So tranquil, child-like, innocent, and deep,
Nor festal gaiety, nor toilsome hours,
Had brought; but, like a flower among the flowers
She had been wandering 'neath a summer sky,
Youth on her lip and gladness in her eye,
Twisting the wild rose from its native thorn,
And the blue scabious from the sunny corn;
Smiling and singing like a spirit fair
That walk'd the world, but had no dwelling there

Digitized by Google

And still (as though their faintly-scented breath
Preserv'd a meek fidelity in death)
Each late imprison'd blossom fondly lingers
Within the touch of her unconscious fingers,
Though, languidly unclasp'd, that hand no more
Guards its possession of the rifled store.

So wearily she lay; so sweetly slept;
So by her side fond watch the mother kept;
And, as above her gentle child she bent,
So like they seem'd in form and lineament,
You might have deem'd her face its shadow gave
To the clear mirror of a fountain's wave;
Only in this they differ'd; that, while one
Was warm and radiant as the summer sun,
The other's smile had more a moonlight play,
For many tears had wept its glow away;
Yet was she fair; of loveliness so true,
That time, which faded, never could subdue:
And though the sleeper, like a half-blown rose,
Show'd bright as angels in her soft repose,
Though bluer veins ran through each snowy lid,
Curtaining sweet eyes, by long dark lashes hid—
Eyes that as yet had never learnt to weep,
But woke up smiling, like a child's, from sleep;—
Though fainter lines were pencill'd on the brow,
Which cast soft shadow on the orbs below;
Though deeper colour flush'd her youthful cheek,
In its smooth curve more joyous and less meek,
And fuller seem'd the small and crimson mouth,
With teeth like those that glitter in the south—
She had but youth's superior brightness, such
As the skill'd painter gives with flattering touch
When he would picture every lingering grace
Which once shown brighter in some copied face;
And it was compliment, whene'er she smil'd,
To say, "Thou'rt like thy mother, my fair child!"

Sweet is the image of the brooding dove!—
Holy as Heaven a mother's tender love!
The love of many prayers and many tears,
Which changes not with dim declining years—
The *only* love which on this teeming Earth
Asks no return from passion's wayward birth;
The only love that, with a touch divine,
Displaces from the heart's most secret shrine
The idol SELF! Oh! prized beneath thy due
When life's untried affections all are new—
Love, from whose calmer hope and nobler rest
(Like a fledged bird, impatient of the nest)
The human heart, rebellious, springs to seek
Delights more vehement, in ties more weak;
How strange to us appears, in after-life,
That term of mingled carelessness and strife,
When guardianship so gentle gall'd our pride,
When it was holiday to leave thy side,
When, with dull ignorance that *would not* learn,
We lost those hours that never can return—
Hours, whose most sweet communion Nature meant
Should be in confidence and kindness spent,
That, we (hereafter mourning) might believe
In human faith, though all around deceive;
Might weigh against the sad and startling crowd
Of ills which wound the weak and chill the proud,
Of woes 'neath which (despite of stubborn will,
Philosophy's vain boast, and erring skill)
The strong heart downward like a willow bends,
Failure of love,—and treachery of friends,—
Our recollections of the undefiled,
The sainted tie, of parent and of child!

Oh! happy days! Oh years that glided by,
Scarce chronicled by one poor passing sigh!
When the dark storm sweeps past us, and the soul
Struggles with fainting strength to reach the goal
When the false baits that lured us only cloy,
What would we give to grasp your vanish'd joy
From the cold quicksand of life's treacherous shore
The backward light our anxious eyes explore,
Measure the miles our wandering feet have come
Sinking heart-weary, far away from home,
Recall the voice that whisper'd love and peace,
The smile that bid our early sorrows cease,
And long to bow our grieving heads, and weep
Low on the gentle breast that lull'd us first to sleep!

Ah! bless'd are they for whom 'mid all their pains
That faithful and unalter'd love remains;
Who, life wreck'd round them,—hunted from their rest,—
And, by all else forsaken or distress'd,—
Claim, in *one* heart, their sanctuary and shrine—
As I, my mother, claim'd my place in thine!

Oft, since that hour, in sadness I retrace
My childhood's vision of thy calm sweet face;
Oft see thy form, its mournful beauty shrouded
In thy black weeds, and coif of widow's woe;
Thy dark expressive eyes all dim and clouded
By that deep wretchedness the lonely know:
Stifling thy grief, to hear some weary task
Conn'd by unwilling lips, with listless air,
Hoarding thy means, lest future need might ask
More than the widow's pittance then could spare.
Hidden, forgotten, by the great and gay,
Enduring sorrow, not by fits and starts,
But the long self-denial, day by day,
Alone amidst thy brood of careless hearts!
Striving to guide, to teach, or to restrain
The young rebellious spirits crowding round,
Who saw not, knew not, felt not for thy pain,
And could not comfort—yet had power to wound!
Ah! how my selfish heart, which since hath grown
Familiar with deep trials of its own,
With riper judgment looking to the past,
Regrets the careless days that flew so fast,
Stamps with remorse each wasted hour of time,
And darkens every folly into crime!

Warriors and statesmen have their meed of praise,
And what they do or suffer men record;
But the long sacrifice of woman's days
Passes without a thought—without a word;
And many a holy struggle for the sake
Of duties sternly, faithfully fulfill'd—
For which the anxious mind must watch and wake,
And the strong feelings of the heart be still'd,—

Digitized by Google

Goes by unheeded as the summer wind,
And leaves no memory and no trace behind!
Yet, it may be, more lofty courage dwells
In one meek heart which braves an adverse fate,
Than his, whose ardent soul indignant swells
Warm'd by the fight, or cheer'd through high debate:
The soldier dies surrounded;—could he *live*
Alone to suffer, and alone to strive?

Answer, ye graves, whose suicidal gloom
Shows deeper horror than a common tomb!
Who sleep within? The men who would evade
An unseen lot of which they felt afraid.
Embarrassment of means, which work'd annoy,—
A past remorse,—a future blank of joy,—
The sinful rashness of a blind despair,—
These were the strokes which sent your victims there.

In many a village churchyard's simple grave,
Where all unmark'd the cypress branches wave;
In many a vault where Death could only claim
The brief inscription of a woman's name;
Of different ranks, and different degrees,
From daily labour to a life of ease,
(From the rich wife who through the weary day
Wept in her jewels, grief's unceasing prey,
To the poor soul who trudged o'er marsh and moor,
And with her baby begg'd from door to door,—)
Lie hearts, which, ere they found that last release,
Had lost all memory of the blessing "peace;"
Hearts, whose long struggle through unpitied years
None saw but Him who marks the mourner's tears;
The obscurely noble! who evaded not
The woe which He had will'd should be their lot,
But nerved themselves to bear!

Of such art thou,
My mother! With thy calm and holy brow,
And high devoted heart, which suffer'd still
Unmurmuring, through each degree of ill.
And, because fate hath will'd that mine should be
A poet's soul (at least in my degree,)—
And that my verse would faintly shadow forth
What I have seen of pure unselfish worth,—
Therefore I speak of thee; that those who read
That trust in woman, which is still my creed,
Thy early-widow'd image may recall
And greet thy nature as the type of all!

Enough! With eyes of fond unwearied love
The mother of my story watch'd above
Her sleeping child; and, as she views the grace
And blushing beauty of that girlish face,
Her thoughts roam back through change of time and tide,
Since first Heaven sent the blessing by her side.

In that sweet vision she again receives
The snow-white cradle, where that tiny head
Lay, like a small bud folded in its leaves,
Foster'd with dew by tears of fondness shed;
Each infantine event, each dangerous hour
Which pass'd with threatening o'er its fragile form,
Her hope, her anguish, as the tender flower
Bloom'd to the sun, or sicken'd in the storm.
In memory's magic mirror glide along,
And scarce she notes the different scene around,
And scarce her lips refrain the cradle-song
Which sooth'd that infant with its lulling sound!

But the dream changes; quiet years roll on;
That dawn of frail existence fleets away,
And she beholds beneath the summer sun
A blessed sight; a little child at play.
The soft light falls upon its golden hair,
And shows a brow intelligently mild;
No more a cipher in this world of care,
Love cheers and chides that happy conscious child.
No more unheeding of her watchful love,
Pride to excel, its docile spirit stirs;
Regret and hope its tiny bosom move,
And looks of fondness brightly answer hers;
O'er the green meadow, and the broomy hill,
In restless joy it bounds and darts along;
Or through the breath of evening, low and still,
Carols with mirthful voice its welcome song.

Again the vision changes; from her view
The CHILD's dear love and antic mirth are gone,
But, in their stead, with cheek of rose-leaf hue,
And fair slight form, and low and silvery tone,
Rises the sweetest spirit thought can call
From memory's distant worlds—the fairy GIRL;
Whose heart her childish pleasures still enthrall,
Whose unbound hair still floats in careless curl,
But in whose blue and meekly lifted eyes,
And in whose shy, though sweet and cordial smile,
And in whose changeful blushes, dimly rise
Shadows and lights that were not seen erewhile:
Shadows and lights that speak of woman's love,
Of all that makes or mars her fate below;
Mysterious prophecies, which time must prove
More bright in glory, or more dark with woe!
And that soft vision also wanders by,
Melting in fond and innocent smiles away,
Till the loved REAL meets the watchful eye
Of her who thus recall'd a former day;
The gentle daughter, for whose precious sake
Her widow'd heart had struggled with its pain,
And still through lonely grief refused to break,
Because *that* tie to Earth did yet remain.
Now, as she fondly gazed, a few meek tears
Stole down her cheek; for she that slumber'd there,
The beautiful, the loved of many years,
A bride betroth'd must leave her fostering care,
Woo'd in another's home apart to dwell—
Oh! might that other love but half as well!

As if the mournful wish had touch'd her heart,
The slumbering maiden woke, with sudden start
Turn'd, with a dazzled and intense surprise,
On that fond face her bright, bewilder'd eyes;
Gazed round on each familiar object near,
As though she doubted yet if sense was clear;
Cover'd her brow and sigh'd, as though to wake
Had power some spell of happy thought to break·
Then murmur'd, in a low and earnest tone,
"Oh! is that blessed dream for ever gone?"

Digitized by Google

Strange is the power of dreams! Who hath not felt,
When in the morning light such visions melt,
How the veil'd soul, though struggling to be free,
Ruled by that deep unfathom'd mystery,
Wakes, haunted by the thoughts of good or ill,
Whose shadowy influence pursues us still?

Sometimes remorse doth weigh our spirits down;
Some crime committed earns Heaven's angriest frown;
Some awful sin, in which the tempted heart
Hath scarce, perhaps, forborne its waking part,
Brings dreams of judgment; loud the thunders roll,
The heavens shrink blacken'd like a flaming scroll;
We faint, we die, beneath the avening rod,
And vainly hide from our offended God.
For oh! though fancy change our mortal lot,
And rule our slumbers, CONSCIENCE sleepeth not;
That strange sad dial, by its own true light,
Points to our thoughts, how dark soe'er the night,
Still by our pillow watchful guard it keeps,
And bids the sinner tremble while he sleeps.

Sometimes, with fearful dangers doom'd to cope,
'Reft of each wild and visionary hope,
Stabb'd with a thousand wounds, we struggle still,
The hand that tortures, powerless to kill.
Sometimes 'mid ocean storms, in fearful strife,
We stem the wave, and shrieking, gasp for life,
While crowding round us, faces rise and gleam,
Some known and loved, some, pictures of our dream;
High on the buoyant waters wildly toss'd—
Low in its foaming caverns darkly lost—
Those flitting forms the dangerous hour partake,
Cling to our aid, or suffer for our sake.
Conscious of present life, the slumbering soul
Still floats us onward, as the billows roll,
Till, snatch'd from death, we seem to touch the strand,
Rise on the shoreward wave, and dash to land!
Alone we come: the forms whose wild array
Gleam'd round us while we struggled, fade away—
We know not, reck not, who the danger shared,
But, vaguely dreaming, feel that *we* are spared.

Sometimes a grief, of fond affection born,
Gnaws at our heart, and bids us weep till morn;
Some anguish, copied from our waking fears,
Wakes the eternal fount of human tears,
Sends us to watch some vision'd bed of death,
Hold the faint hand, and catch the parting breath,
Where those we prized the most, and loved the best,
Seem darkly sinking to the grave's long rest;
Lo! in our arms they fade, they faint, they die,
Before our eyes the funeral train sweeps by;
We hear the orphan's sob—the widow's wail—
O'er our dim senses woful thoughts prevail,
Till, with a burst of grief, the spell we break,
And, weeping for th' imagined loss, awake.

Ah me! from dreams like these aroused at length,
How leaps the spirit to its former strength!
What memories crowd the newly conscious brain,
What gleams of rapture, and what starts of pain!
Till from the soul the heavy mists stand clear,
All wanes and fades that seem'd so darkly drear
The sun's fair rays those shades of death destroy
And passionate thankfulness and tears of joy
Swell at our hearts, as, gazing on his beam,
We start, and cry aloud, "Thank Heaven, 'twas but a dream!"

But there are visions of a fairer kind,
Thoughts fondly cherish'd by the slumbering mind,
Which, when they vanish from the waking brain,
We close our eyes, and long to dream again.
Their dim voice calls to our forsaken side
Those who betray'd us, seeming true and tried;
Those whom the fast receding waves of time
Have floated from us; those who in the prime
And glory of our young life's eagle flight
Shone round like rays, encircling us with light,
And gave the bright similitude of truth
To fair illusions—vanish'd with our youth.
They bring again the tryst of early love,
(That passionate hope, all other hopes above!)
Bid the pale hair, long shrouded in the grave,
Round the young head in floating ringlets wave,
And fill the air with echoes. Gentle words,
Low laughter, and the singing of sweet birds,
Come round us then; and drooping of light boughs,
Whose shadow could not cool our burning brows,
And lilac-blossoms, scenting the warm air,
And long laburnums, fragile, bright, and fair;
And murmuring breezes through the green leaves straying,
And rippling waters in the sunshine playing,
All that around our slumbering sense can fling
The glory of some half-forgotten spring!
They bring again the fond approving gaze
Of old true friends, who mingled love with praise,
When fame (that cold bright guiding star below)
Took from affection's light a borrow'd glow—
And, strong in all the might of earnest thought,
Through the long studious night untired we wrought,
That others might the morning hour beguile,
With the fond triumph of their wondering smile.
What though those dear approving smiles be gone,
What though we strive neglected and alone,
What though no voice *now* mourns our hope's alloy,
Nor in the hour of triumph gives us joy?
In *dreams* the days return when this was not,
When strong affection sooth'd our toilsome lot:
Cheer'd, loved, admonished, lauded, we aspire,
And the sick soul regains its former fire.

Beneath the influence of this fond spell,
Happy, contented, bless'd, we seem to dwell;
Sweet faces shine with love's own tender ray,
Which frown, or boldly turn from us, by day;
The lonely orphan hears a parent's voice;
Sad childless mothers once again rejoice;
The poor deserted seems a happy bride;
And the long parted wander side by side.

Ah, vain deceit! Awaking with a start,
Sick grow the beatings of the troubled heart;

Digitized by Google

Silence, like some dark mantle, drops around,
Quenching th' imagined voice's welcome sound;
Again the soul repeats its old farewells,
Again recalls sad hours and funeral knells;
Again, as daylight opens on their view,
The orphan shrinks, the mother mourns anew;
'Till clear we feel, as fades the morning star,
How left, how lonely, how oppress'd we are!

And other dreams exist, more vague and bright
Than MEMORY ever brought to cheer the night;—
Most to the young and happy do they come,
To those who know no shelter but of home;
To those of whom the inspired writer spoke,
When from his lips the words prophetic broke,
Which (conscious of the strong and credulous spell
Experience only in the heart can quell)
Promised the nearer glimpse of perfect truth
Not to cold wisdom, but to fervent youth;
Each, in their measure, caught its fitful gleams—
The young saw visions, and the old dream'd dreams.

The young! Oh! what should wandering fancy bring
In life's first spring-time but the thoughts of spring?
World without winter, blooming amaranth bowers,
Garlands of brightness wreath'd from changeless flowers;
Where shapes like angels wander to and fro,
Unwing'd, but glorious, in the noontide glow,
Which steeps the hills, the dales, the earth, the sea,
In one soft flood of golden majesty.
In this world,—so create,—no sighs nor tears,—
No sadness brought with lapse of varying years,—
No cold betrayal of the trusting heart,—
No knitting up of love fore-doom'd to part,—
No pain, deformity, nor pale disease,—
No wars,—no tyranny,—no fears that freeze
The rapid current of the restless blood,—
Nor effort scorn'd,—nor act misunderstood,—
No dark remorse for ever-haunting sin,—
But all at peace without,—at rest within;
And hopes which gild thought's wildest waking hours,
Scatter'd around us carelessly as flowers.

Oh! Paradise, in vain didst thou depart;
Thine image still is stamp'd on every heart!
Though mourning man in vain may seek to trace
The site of that which *was* his dwelling-place,
Though the four glittering rivers *now* divide
No realms of beauty with their rolling tide,
Each several life yet opens with the view
Of that unblighted world where Adam drew
The breath of being: in each several mind,
However cramp'd, and fetter'd, and confined,
The innate power of beauty folded lies,
And, like a bud beneath the summer skies,
Blooms out in youth through many a radiant day,
Though in life's winter frost it dies away.

From such a vision, bright with all the fame
Her youth, her innocence, her hope could frame,
The maiden woke: and, when her shadowy gaze
Had lost the dazzled look of wild amaze
Turn'd on her mother when she first awoke,
Thus to her questioning glance she answering spoke:—

"Methought, oh! gentle mother, by thy side
I dwelt no more as now, but through a wide
And sweet world wander'd; nor even then alone
For ever in that dream's soft light stood one,—
I know not who,—yet most familiar seem'd
The fond companionship of which I dream'd.
A brother's love, is but a name to me;
A father's, brighten'd not my infancy;
To me in childhood's years, no stranger's face
Took, from long habit, friendship's holy grace;
My life hath still been lone, and needed not,
Heaven knows, more perfect love than was my lot
In thy dear heart: how dream'd I then, sweet mother,
Of any love but thine, who knew no other?

"We seem'd, this shadow and myself, to be
Together by the blue and boundless sea:
No settled home was present to my thought—
No other form my clouded fancy brought;
This one familiar presence still beguiled
My very thought, and look'd on me and smiled.
Fair stretch'd in beauty lay the glittering strand,
With low green copses sloping from the land;
And tangled underwood and sunny fern,
And flowers whose humble names none cared to learn,
Small starry wild flowers, white and gold and blue,
With leaves turn'd crimson by the autumnal hue,
Bask'd in the fervour of the noontide glow,
Whose hot rays pierced the thirsty roots below.
The floating nautilus rose clear and pale,
As though a spirit trimm'd its fairy sail,
White and transparent; and beyond it gleam'd
Such light as never yet on ocean beam'd:
And pink-lipp'd shells, and many-colour'd weeds,
And long brown bulbous things like jasper beads,
And glistening pearls in beauty faint and fair,
And all things strange, and wonderful, and rare,
Whose true existence travellers make known,
Seem'd scattered there, and easily my own.
And then we wove our ciphers in the sands,
All fondly intertwined by loving hands;
And laugh'd to see the rustling snow-white spray
Creep o'er the names and wash their trace away.
And the storm came not, though the white foam curl'd
In lines of brightness far along the coast;
Though many a ship, with swelling sails unfurl'd,
From the mid-sea to sheltering haven cross'd;
Though the wild billows heaved, and rose, and broke,
One o'er the other with a restless sound,
And the deep spirit of the wind awoke,
Ruffling in wrath each glassy verdant mound;
While onward roll'd that army of huge waves,
Until the foremost, with exulting roar,
Rose, proudly crested, o'er his brother slaves,
And dash'd triumphant on the groaning shore!
For then the moon rose up, night's mournful queen,
'Walking with white feet o'er the troubled sea,'
And all grew still again, as she had been
Heaven's messenger to bring tranquillity;
Till, pale and tender, on the glistening main
She sank and smiled like one who loves in vain.
And still we linger'd by that shadowy strand,
Happy, yet full of thought, hand link'd in hand:

Digitized by Google

The hush'd waves rippling softly at our feet,
The night-breeze freshening o'er the summer's heat;
With our hearts beating, and our gazing eyes
Fix'd on the star-light of those deep blue skies,
Blessing 'the year, the hour, the place, the time;'
While sounded, faint and far, some turret's midnight chime.

"It pass'd that vision of the ocean's might!
I know not how, for in my slumbering mind
There was no movement, all was shifting light,
Through which we floated with the wandering wind;
And, still together, in a different scene,
We look'd on England's woodland, fresh and green.

"No perfume of the cultured rose was there,
Wooing the senses with its garden smell,—
Nor snow-white lily,—called so proudly fair,
Though by the poor man's cot she loves to dwell,
Nor finds his gentle garden scant of room
To bid her stately buds in beauty bloom;—
Nor jasmin, with her pale stars shining through
The myrtle darkness of her leaf's green hue,—
Nor heliotrope, whose gray and heavy wreath
Mimics the orchard blossoms' fruity breath—
Nor clustering dahlia, with its scentless flowers
Cheating the heart through autumn's faded hours,—
Nor bright chrysanthimum, whose train'd array
Still makes the rich man's winter path look gay,
And bows its hardy head when wild winds blow,
To free its petals from the fallen snow;—
Nor yet carnation;"—

(Thou, beloved of all
The plants that thrive at art or nature's call,
By one who greets thee with a weary sigh
As the dear friend of happy days gone by;
By one who names thee last, but loves thee first,
Of all the flowers a garden ever nursed;
The mute remembrancer and gentle token
Of links which heavy hands have roughly broken,
Welcomed through many a summer with the same
Unalter'd gladness as when first ye came,
And welcomed still, though—as in latter years
We often welcome pleasant things—with tears!)

I wander! In the dream these had no place—
Nor sorrow:—all was nature's freshest grace.

"There, wild geranium, with its woolly stem
And aromatic breath, perfumed the glade;
And fairy speedwell, like some sapphire gem,
Lighted with purple sparks the hedge-row's shade;
And woodbine, with her tinted calyxes,
And dog-rose glistening with the dews of morn,
And tangled wreaths of tufted clematis,
Whose blossoms pale the careless eye may scorn,
(As green and light her fairy mantles fall
To hide the rough hedge or the crumbling wall,)
But in whose breast the laden wild-bees dive
For the best riches of their teeming hive:

"There, sprang the sunny cricket; there, was spread
The fragile silver of the spider's thread,
Stretching from blade to blade of emerald grass,
Unbroken, till some human footstep pass;
There, by the rippling stream that murmured on,
Now seen, now hidden—half in light, half sun—
The darting dragon-fly, with sudden gleam,
Shot, as it went, a gold and purple beam;
And the fish leap'd within the deeper pool,
And the green trees stretch'd out their branches cool,
Where many a bird hush'd in her peopled nest
The unfledged darlings of her feather'd breast,
Listening her mate's clear song, in that sweet grove
Where all around breathed happiness and love!

"And while we talk'd the summer hours flew fast,
As hours may fly, with those whose love is young;
Who fear no future, and who know no past,
Dating existence from the hope that sprung
Up in their hearts with such a sudden light,
That all beyond shows dark and blank as night.

"Until methought we trod a wide flat heath,
Where yew and cypress darkly seem'd to wave
O'er countless tombs, so beautiful, that death
Seem'd here to make a garden of the grave!
All that is holy, tender, full of grace,
Was sculptured on the monuments around,
And many a line the musing eye could trace,
Which spoke unto the heart without a sound.
There lay the warrior and the son of song,
And there—in silence till the judgment-day—
The orator, whose all-persuading tongue
Had moved the nations with resistless sway;
There slept pale men whom science taught to climb
Restlessly upward all their labouring youth;
Who left, half conquer'd, secrets which in time
Burst on mankind in ripe and glorious truth.
He that had gazed upon the steadfast stars,
And could foretell the dark eclipse's birth,
And when red comets in their blazing cars
Should sweep above the awed and troubled earth:—
He that had sped brave vessels o'er the seas,
Which swiftly bring the wanderer to his home,
Uncanvass'd ships, which move without a breeze,
Their bright wheels dashing through the ocean foam:—
All, who in this life's bounded brief career
Had shone amongst or served their fellow-men,
And left a name embalm'd in glory here,
Lay calmly buried on that magic plain.
And he who wander'd with me in my dream,
Told me their histories as we onward went,
Till the grave shone with such a hallow'd beam,
Such pleasure with their memory seem'd blent,
That, when we look'd to Heaven, our upward eyes
With no funereal sadness mock'd the skies!

"Then, change of scene, and time, and place once more;
And by a Gothic window, richly bright,

Digitized by Google

Whose stain'd armorial bearings on the floor
Flung the quaint tracery of their colour'd light,
We sate together; his most noble head
Bent o'er the storied tome of other days,
And still he commented on all we read,
And taught me what to love, and what to praise.
Then Spenser made the summer day seem brief,
Or Milton sounded with a loftier song,
Then Cowper charm'd, with lays of gentle grief,
Or rough old Dryden roll'd the hour along.
Or, in his varied beauty dearer still,
Sweet Shakspeare changed the world around at will;
And we forgot the sunshine of that room
To sit with Jacquez in the forest gloom;
To look abroad with Juliet's anxious eye
For her boy-lover 'neath the moonlight sky;
Stand with Macbeth upon the haunted heath,
Or weep for gentle Desdemona's death;
Watch, on bright Cydnus' wave, the glittering sheen
And silken sails of Egypt's wanton Queen;
Or roam with Ariel through that island strange
Where spirits, and not men, were wont to range,
Still struggling on through brake, and bush, and hollow,
Hearing that sweet voice calling—'Follow! follow!'

"Nor were there wanting lays of other lands,
For these were all familiar in his hands:
And Dante's dream of horror work'd its spell,—
And Petrarch's sadness on our bosom fell,—
And prison'd Tasso's—he, the coldly-loved,
The madly-loving! he, so deeply proved
By many a year of darkness, like the grave,
For her who dared not plead, or would not save,
For her who thought the poet's suit brought shame,
Whose passion hath immortalized her name!
And Egmont, with his noble heart betray'd,—
And Carlos, haunted by a murder'd shade,—
And Faust's strange legend, sweet and wondrous wild,
Stole many a tear:—creation's loveliest child!
Guileless, ensnared, and tempted Margaret,
Who could peruse thy fate with eyes unwet?

"Then, through the lands we read of, far away,
The vision led me all a summer's day:
And we look'd round on southern Italy,
Where her dark head the graceful cypress rears
In arrowy straightness and soft majesty,
And the sun's face a mellower glory wears;
Bringing, where'er his warm light richly shines,
Sweet odours from the gum-distilling pines;
And casting o'er white palaces a glow,
Like morning's hue on mountain-peaks of snow.

"Those palaces! how fair their columns rose!
Their courts, cool fountains, and wide porticos!
And ballustrated roofs, whose very form
Told what an unknown stranger was the storm!
In one of these we dwelt: its painted walls
A master's hand had been employed to trace;
Its long cool range of shadowy marble halls
Was fill'd with statues of most living grace;
While on its ceiling roll'd the fiery car
Of the bright day-god, chasing night afar,—
Or Jove's young favourite, toward Olympus height
Soar'd with the eagle's dark majestic flight,—
Or fair Apollo's harp seem'd freshly strung,
All Heaven group'd round him, listening while he sung.

"So, in the garden's plann'd and planted bound
All wore the aspect of enchanted ground;
Thick orange-groves, close arching over head,
Shelter'd the paths our footsteps loved to tread;
Or ilex-trees shut out, with shadow sweet,
Th' oppressive splendour of the noontide heat.
Through the bright vista, at each varying turn,
Gleam'd the white statue, or the graceful urn;
And, paved with many a curved and twisted line
Of fair Mosaic's strange and quaint design,
Terrace on terrace rose, with steep so slight,
That scarce the pausing eye inquired the height,
Till stretch'd beneath in far perspective lay
The glittering city and the deep blue bay!
Then as we turn'd again to groves and bowers,
(Rich with the perfume of a thousand flowers,)
The sultry day was cheated of its force
By the sweet winding of some streamlet's course.
From sculptured arch, and ornamented walls,
Rippled a thousand tiny waterfalls,
While here and there an open basin gave
Rest to the eye and freshness to the wave;
Here, high above the imprison'd waters, stood
Some imaged Naïad, guardian of the flood;
There, in a cool and grotto-like repose,
The sea-born goddess from her shell arose;
Or river-god his fertile urn display'd,
Gushing at distance through the lone arcade,—
Or Triton, lifting his wild conch on high,
Spouted the silver tribute to the sky,—
Or, lovelier still, (because to nature true,
Even in the thought creative genius drew,)
Some statue-nymph, her bath of beauty o'er,
Stood gently bending by the rocky shore,
And, like Bologna's sweet and graceful dream,
From her moist hair wrung out the living stream.

"Bright was the spot! and still we linger'd on
Unwearied, till the summer day was done;
Till he, who, when the morning dew was wet,
In glory rose—in equal glory set.
Fair sank his light, unclouded to the last,
And o'er that land its glow of beauty cast;
And the sweet breath of evening air went forth
To cool the bosom of the fainting earth;
To bid the pale-leaved olives lightly wave
Upon their seaward slope (whose waters lave
With listless gentleness the golden strand,
And scarcely leave, and scarce return to land;)
Or with its wings of freshness, wandering round
Visit the heights of many a villa crown'd,
Where the still pine and cypress, side by side,
Look from their distant hills on Ocean's tide.

"The cypress and the pine! Ah, still I see
These thy green children, lovely Italy!
Nature's dear favourites, allow'd to wear
Their summer hue throughout the circling year

Digitized by Google

And oft, when wandering out at even-time
To watch the sunsets of a colder clime,
As the dim landscape fades and grows more faint,
Fancy's sweet power a different scene shall paint;
Enrich with deeper tints the colours given
To the pale beauty of our English heaven,—
Bid purple mountains rise among the clouds,
Or deem their mass some marble palace shrouds,
Trace on the red horizon's level line,
In outlines dark, the high majestic pine,—
And hear, amid the groups of English trees,
His sister cypress murmuring to the breeze!

"Never again shall evening, sweet and still,
Gleam upon river, mountain, rock, or hill,—
Never again shall fresh and budding spring,
Or brighter summer, hue of beauty bring,
In this, the clime where 'tis my lot to dwell,
But shall recall, as by a magic spell,
Thy scenes, dear land of poetry and song!
Bid thy fair statues on my memory throng;
Thy glorious pictures gleam upon my sight
Like fleeting shadows o'er the summer light;
And send my haunted heart to dwell once more,
Glad and entranced by thy delightful shore—
Thy shore, where rolls that blue and tideless sea,
Bright as thyself, thou radiant Italy!

"And there (where Beauty's spirit sure had birth,
Though she hath wander'd since upon the earth,
And scatter'd, as she pass'd, some sparks of thought,
Such as of old her sons of genius wrought,
To show what strength the immortal soul can wield
E'en here, in this its dark and narrow field,
And fills us with a fond inquiring thirst
To see that land which claim'd her triumphs first)
Music was brought—with soft impressive power—
To fill with varying joy the varying hour.
We welcomed it; for welcome still to all
It comes, in cottage, court, or lordly hall;
And in the long bright summer evenings, oft
We sate and listened to some measure soft
From many instruments; or, faint and lone,
(Touch'd by his gentle hand, or by my own,)
The little lute its chorded notes would send
Tender and clear; and with our voices blend
Cadence so true, that, when the breeze swept by,
One mingled echo floated on its sigh!

"And still as day by day we saw depart,
I was the living idol of his heart:
How to make joy a portion of the air
That breathed around me, seem'd his only care.
For me the harp was strung, the page was turn'd;
For me the morning rose, the sunset burn'd;
For me the spring put on her verdant suit;
For me the summer flower, the autumn fruit;
The very world seem'd mine, so mighty strove
For my contentment, that enduring love.

"I see him still, dear mother! Still I hear
That voice so deeply soft, so strangely clear;
Still in the air wild wandering echoes float,
And bring my dream's sweet music note for note!
Oh! shall those sounds no more my fancy bless
Which fill my heart and on my memory press?
Shall I no more those sunset clouds behold,
Floating like bright transparent thrones of gold?
The skies, the seas, the hills of glorious blue;
The glades and groves, with glories shining through;
The bands of red and purple, richly seen
Athwart the sky of pale, faint, gem-like green,
When the breeze slept, the earth lay hush'd and still,
When the low sun sank slanting from the hill,
And slow and amber-ting'd the moon uprose,
To watch his farewell hour in glory close?
Is all that radiance past—gone by for ever—
And must there in its stead for ever be
The gray, sad sky, the cold and clouded river.
And dismal dwellings by the wintry sea?
E'er half a summer, altering day by day,
In fickle brightness, here, hath pass'd away!
And was that form (whose love might still sustain)
Nought but a vapour of the dreaming brain?—
Would I had slept for ever!"
Sad she sigh'd;
To whom the mournful mother thus replied:—

"Upbraid not Heaven, whose wisdom thus would rule
A world whose changes are the soul's best school;
All dream like thee, and 'tis for mercy's sake
That those who dream the wildest, soonest wake;
All deem perfection's system would be found
In giving earthly sense no stint or bound;
All look for happiness beneath the sun,
And each expects what God hath given to *none*.

"In what an idle luxury of joy
Would thy spoil'd heart its useless hours employ!
In what a selfish loneliness of light
Wouldst thou exist, read we thy dream aright!
How hath thy sleeping spirit broke the chain
Which knits thy human lot to others' pain,
And made this world of peopled millions seem
For thee and for the lover of thy dream!

"Think not my heart with cold indifference heard
The various feelings which in thine have stirr'd,
Or that its sad and weary currents know
Faint sympathy, except for human woe:
Well have the dormant echoes of my breast
Answer'd the joys thy gentle voice express'd;
Conjured a vision of the stately mate
With whom the flattering vision link'd thy fate;
And follow'd thee through grove and woodland wild,
Where so much natural beauty round thee smiled.

"What man so worldly-wise, or chill'd by age,
Who, bending o'er the faint descriptive page,
Recalls not such a scene in some far nook—
(Whereon his eyes, perchance, no more shall look;)
Some hawthorn copse, some gnarl'd majestic tree,
The favourite play-place of his infancy?
Who has not felt for Cowper's sweet lament,
When twelve years' course their cruel change had sent;

Digitized by Google

When his fell'd poplars gave no further shade,
And low on earth the blackbird's nest was laid;
When in a desert sunshine, bare and blank,
Lay the green field and river's mossy bank;
And melody of bird or branch no more
Rose with the breeze that swept along the shore?

"Few are the hearts, (nor theirs of kindliest frame,)
On whom fair Nature holds not such a claim;
And oft, in after-life, some simple thing—
A bank of primroses in early spring—
The tender scent which hidden violets yield—
The sight of cowslips in a meadow-field—
Or young laburnum's pendant yellow chain—
May bring the favourite play-place back again!
Our youthful mates are gone; some dead, some changed,
With whom that pleasant spot was gladly ranged;
Ourselves, perhaps, more alter'd e'en than they—
But *there* still blooms the blossom-showering May
There still along the hedge-row's verdant line
The linnet sings, the thorny brambles twine;
Still in the copse a troop of merry elves
Shout—the gay image of our former selves;
And still, with sparkling eyes and eager hands,
Some rosy urchin high on tiptoe stands,
And plucks the ripest berries from the bough—
Which tempts a different generation now!

"What though no *real* beauty haunt that spot,
By graver minds beheld and noticed not?
Can we forget that once to our young eyes
It wore the aspect of a paradise?
No; still around its hallowed precinct lives
The fond mysterious charm that memory gives;
The man recals the feelings of the boy,
And clothes the meanest flower with freshness and with joy.

"Nor think by elder hearts forgotten quite
Love's whisper'd words; youth's sweet and strange delight!
They live—though after-memories fade away;
They live to cheer life's slow declining day;
Haunting the widow by her lonely hearth,
As, meekly smiling at her children's mirth,
She spreads her fair thin hands toward the fire,
To seek the warmth their slacken'd veins require:
Or gladdening her to whom Heaven's mercy spares
Her old companion with his silver hairs;
And while he dozes—changed, and dull, and weak—
And his hush'd grandchild signs, but dares not speak,—
Bidding her watch, with many a tender smile,
The wither'd form which slumbers all the while.

"Yes! sweet the voice of those we loved! the tone
Which cheers our memory as we sit alone,
And will not leave us; the o'er-mastering force,
Whose under-current's strange and hidden course
Bids some chance word, by colder hearts forgot,
Return—and still return—yet weary not
The ear which wooes its sameness! How, when Death
Hath stopp'd with ruthless hand some precious breath,
The memory of the *voice* he hath destroy'd
Lives in our souls, as in an aching void!
How, through the varying fate of after-years,
When stifled sorrow weeps but casual tears,
If some stray tone seem *like* the voice we know,
The heart leaps up with answer faint and true!
Greeting again that sweet, long-vanish'd sound,
As, in earth's nooks of ever-haunted ground,
Strange accident, or man's capricious will,
Wakes the lone echoes and they answer still!

"Oh! what a shallow fable cheats the age,
When the lost lover, on the motley stage,
Wrapp'd from his mistress in some quaint disguise,
Deceives her ears, because he cheats her eyes!
Rather, if all could fade which charm'd us first,—
If, by some magic stroke, some plague-spot cursed,
All outward semblance left the form beloved
A wreck unrecognised, and half disproved,
At the dear sound of that familiar voice
Her waken'd heart should tremble and rejoice,
Leap to its faith at once,—and spurn the doubt
Which, on such showing, barr'd his welcome out!

"And if even *words* are sweet, what, what is song,
When lips we love, the melody prolong?
How thrills the soul, and vibrates to that lay,
Swells with the glorious sound, or dies away!
How, to the cadence of the simplest words
That ever hung upon the wild harp's chords,
The breathless heart lies listening; as it felt
All life within it on that music dwelt,
And hush'd the beating pulse's rapid power
By its own will, for that enchanted hour!

"Ay! *then* to those who love the science well,
Music becomes a passion and a spell!
Music, the tender child of rudest times,
The gentle native of all lands and climes;
Who hymns alike man's cradle and his grave,
Lulls the low cot, or peals along the nave;
Cheers the poor peasant, who his native hills
With wild Tyrolean echoes sweetly fills;
Inspires the Indian's low monotonous chant,
Weaves skilful melodies for luxury's haunt;
And still, through all these changes, lives the same,
Spirit without a home, without a name,
Coming, where all is discord, strife, and sin,
To prove some innate harmony within
Our listening souls; and lull the heaving breast
With the dim vision of an unknown rest!

"But, dearest child, though many a joy be given
By the pure bounty of all-pitying Heaven,—
Though sweet emotions in our hearts have birth,
As flowers are spangled on the lap of earth,—
Though, with the flag of hope and triumph hung
High o'er our heads, we start when life is young,
And onward cheer'd, by sense, and sight, and sound,
Like a launch'd bark, we enter with a bound,

Digitized by Google

Yet must the dark cloud lour, the tempest fall,
And the same chance of shipwreck waits for all.
Happy are they who leave the harbouring land
Not for a summer voyage, hand in hand,
Pleasure's light slaves: but with an earnest eye
Exploring all the future of their sky;
That so, when Life's career at length is past,
To the right haven they may steer at last,
And safe from hidden rock, or open gale,
Lay by the oar, and furl the slacken'd sail,—
To anchor deeply on that tranquil shore
Where vexing storms can never reach them more!

"Wouldst thou be singled out by partial Heaven
The ONE to whom a cloudless lot is given?
Look round the world, and see what fate is there.
Which justice can pronounce exempt from care:
Though bright they bloom to empty outward show,
There lurks in each some canker-worm of woe;
Still by some thorn the onward step is cross'd,
Nor least repining those who're envied most:
The poor have struggling, toil, and wounded pride,
Which seeks, and seeks in vain, its rags to hide;
The rich, cold jealousies, intrigues, and strife,
And heart-sick discontent which poisons life;
The loved are parted by the hand of Death,
The hated live to curse each other's breath:
The wealthy noble mourns the want of heirs;
While, each the object of incessant prayers,
Gay, hardy sons, around the widow's board,
With careless smiles devour her scanty hoard;
And hear no sorrow in her stifled sigh,
And see no terror in her anxious eye,—
While *she* in fancy antedates the time
When, scatter'd far and wide in many a clime,
These heirs to nothing but their father's name
Must earn their bread, and struggle hard for fame;
To sultry India sends her fair-hair'd boy—
Sees the dead desk another's youth employ—
And parts with one to sail the uncertain main,
Never perhaps on earth to meet again!

"Nor e'en does love, whose fresh and radiant beam
Gave added brightness to thy wandering dream,
Preserve from bitter touch of ills unknown,
But rather brings strange sorrows of its own.
Various the ways in which our souls are tried;
Love often fails where most our faith relied;
Some wayward heart may win, without a thought,
That which thine own by sacrifice had bought;
May carelessly aside the treasure cast,
And yet be madly worshipp'd to the last;
Whilst thou, forsaken, grieving, left to pine,
Vainly may'st claim his plighted faith as thine;
Vainly his idol's charms with thine compare,
And know thyself as young, as bright, as fair;
Vainly in jealous pangs consume thy day,
And waste the sleepless night in tears away;
Vainly with forced indulgence strive to smile
In the cold world, heart-broken all the while,
Or from its glittering and inquiet crowd,
Thy brain on fire, thy spirit crush'd and bow'd,
Creep home unnoticed, there to weep alone,
Mock'd by a claim which gives thee not thine own,
Which leaves thee bound through all thy blighted youth
To him whose perjured soul hath broke its truth;
While the just world, beholding thee bereft,
Scorns—not his sin—but *thee*, for being left!

"Ah! never to the sensualist appeal,
Nor deem his frozen bosom aught can feel.
Affection, root of all fond memories,
Which bids what once hath charm'd for ever please,
He knows not: all thy beauty could inspire
Was but a sentiment of low desire:
If from thy cheek the rose's hue be gone,
How should love stay which loved for that alone?
Or, if thy youthful face be still as bright
As when it first entranced his eager sight,
Thou art *the same*; there is thy fault, thy crime,
Which fades the charms yet spared by rapid time.
Talk to him of the happy days gone by,
Conceal'd aversion chills his shrinking eye:
While in thine agony thou still dost rave,
Impatient wishes doom thee to the grave;
And if his cold and selfish thought had power
T' accelerate the fatal final hour,
The silent murder were already done,
And thy white tomb would glitter in the sun.
What wouldst thou hold by? What is it to him
That for his sake thy weeping eyes are dim?
His pall'd and wearied senses rove apart,
And for his heart—thou never *hadst* his heart.

"True, there is better love, whose balance just
Mingles soul's instinct with our grosser dust,
And leaves affection, strengthening day by day,
Firm to assault, impervious to decay.
To such, a star of hope thy love shall be
Whose steadfast light he still desires to see;
And age shall vainly mar thy beauty's grace,
Or wantons plot to steal into thy place,
Or wild temptation, from her hidden bowers,
Fling o'er his path her bright but poisonous flowers,—
Dearer to him than all who thus beguile,
Thy faded face, and thy familiar smile;
Thy glance, which still hath welcomed him for years,
Now bright with gladness, and now dim with tears!
And if (for we are weak) division come
On wings of discord to that happy home,
Soon is the painful hour of anger past,
Too sharp, too strange an agony to last;
And, like some river's bright abundant tide
Which art or accident hath forced aside,
The well-springs of affection, gushing o'er,
Back to their natural channels flow once more.

"Ah! sad it is when one thus link'd departs
When death, that mighty severer of true hearts,
Sweeps through the halls so lately loud in mirth,
And leaves pale sorrow weeping by the hearth!
Bitter it is to wander there alone,
To fill the vacant place, the empty chair,
With a dear vision of the loved one gone,
And start to see it vaguely melt in air!
Bitter to find all joy that once hath been
Double its value when 'tis pass'd away,—

Digitized by Google

To feel the blow which time should make less keen
Increase its burden each successive day,—
To need good counsel, and to miss the voice,
The ever trusted, and the ever true,
Whose tones were wont to cheer our faltering choice,
And show what holy virtue bade us do,—
To bear deep wrong and bow the widow'd head
In helpless anguish, no one to defend;
Or worse,—in lieu of him, the kindly dead,
Claim faint assistance from some lukewarm friend,—
Yet scarce perceive the extent of all our loss
Till the fresh tomb be green with gathering moss—
Till many a morn have met our sadden'd eyes
With none to say "Good morrow;"—many an eve
Send its red glory through the tranquil skies,
Each bringing with it deeper cause to grieve!

"This is a destiny which may be thine—
The common grief: God will'd it should be mine:
Short was the course our happy love had run,
And hard it was to say 'Thy will be done!'

"Yet those whom man, not God, hath parted, know
A heavier pang, a more enduring woe;
No softening memory mingles with *their* tears,
Still the wound rankles on through dreary years,
Still the heart feels, in bitterest hours of blame,
It dares not curse the long-familiar name;
Still, vainly free, through many a cheerless day,
From weaker ties turns helplessly away,
Sick for the smiles that bless'd its home of yore,
The natural joys of life that come no more;
And, all bewildered by the abyss, whose gloom
Dark and impassable as is the tomb,
Lies stretch'd between the future and the past,—
Sinks into deep and cold despair at last.

"Heaven give thee poverty, disease, or death,
Each varied ill that waits on human breath,
Rather than bid thee linger out thy life
In the long toil of such unnatural strife.
To wander through the world unreconciled,
Heart weary as a spirit-broken child,
And think it were an hour of bliss like heaven
If thou could'st *die*—forgiving and forgiven,—
Or with a feverish hope, of anguish born,
(Nerving thy mind to feel indignant scorn
Of all the cruel foes who 'twixt ye stand,
Holding thy heartstrings with a reckless hand,)
Steal to his presence, now unseen so long,
And claim *his* mercy who hath dealt the wrong!
Into the aching depths of thy poor heart
Dive, as it were, even to the roots of pain,
And wrench up thoughts that tear thy soul apart,
And burn like fire through thy bewilder'd brain.
Clothe them in passionate words of wild appeal
To teach thy fellow-creature *how* to feel,—
Pray, weep, exhaust thyself in maddening tears,—
Recall the hopes, the influences of years,—
Kneel, dash thyself upon the senseless ground,
Writhe as the worm writhes with dividing wound,—
Invoke the heaven that knows thy sorrow's truth,
By all the softening memories of youth—
By every hope that cheer'd thine earlier day—
By every tear that washes wrath away—
By every old remembrance long gone by—
By every pang that makes thee yearn to die;
And learn at length how deep and stern a blow
Near hands can strike, and yet no pity show.

"Oh! weak to suffer, savage to inflict,
Is man's commingling nature; hear him now
Some transient trial of his life depict,
Hear him in holy rites a suppliant bow;
See him shrink back from sickness and from pain
And in his sorrow to his God complain;
'Remit my trespass, spare my sin,' he cries,
'All-merciful, Almighty, and All-wise;
Quench this affliction's bitter whelming tide,
Draw out thy barbed arrow from my side:'—
—And rises from that mockery of prayer
To hale some brother-debtor to despair!

"May this be spared thee! Yet be sure, my child,
(Howe'er that dream thy fancy hath beguiled,)
Some sorrow lurks to cloud thy future fate;
Thy share of tears,—come early or come late,—
Must still be shed; and 'twere as vain a thing
To ask of Nature one perpetual spring
As to evade those sad autumnal hours,
Or deem thy path of life should bloom, all flowers."

She ceased: and that fair maiden heard the truth
With the fond passionate despair of youth,
Which, new to suffering, gives its sorrow vent
In outward signs and bursts of wild lament:—

"If this be so, then, mother, let me die
Ere yet the glow hath faded from my sky!
Let me die young; before the holy trust
In human kindness crumbles into dust;
Before I suffer what I have not earn'd,
Or see by treachery my truth return'd;
Before the love I live for, fades away;
Before the hopes I cherish'd most, decay;
Before the withering touch of fearful change
Makes some familiar face look cold and strange,
Or some dear heart, close knitted to my own,
By perishing, hath left me more alone!
Though death be bitter, I can brave its pain
Better than all which threats if I remain:
While my soul, freed from ev'ry chance of ill,
Soars to that God whose high mysterious will
Sent me, foredoom'd to grief, with wandering feet,
To grope my way through all this fair deceit!"

Her parent heard the words with grieved amaze,
And thus return'd, with calm reproving gaze:—

"Blaspheme not Heaven with rash impatient speech,
Nor deem, at thine own hour, its rest to reach,
Unhappy child! The full appointed time
Is His to choose; and when the sullen chime,
And deep-toned striking of the funeral bell,
Thy fate to earthly ears shall sadly tell,
Oh! may the death thou talk'st of as a boon,
Find thee prepared,—nor come even then too soon!

Digitized by Google

"True, ere thou meet'st that long and dreamless sleep,
Thy heart must ache—thy weary eyes must weep:
It is our human lot! The fairest child
That e'er on loving mother brightly smiled,—
Most watch'd, most tended—ere his eyelids close
Hath had his little share of infant woes,
And dies familiar with a sense of grief,
Though for all else his life hath been too brief!
But shall we therefore, murmuring against God,
Question the justice of his chastening rod,
And look to earthly joys as though *they* were
The prize immortal souls were given to share?

"Oh! were such joys and this vain world alone
The term of human hope—where, where would be
The victims of some tyranny unknown,
Who sank, still conscious that the *mind* was free?
They that have lain in dungeons years on years,
No voice to cheer their darkness,—they whose pain
Of horrid torture wrung forth blood with tears,
Murder'd, perhaps, for some rapacious gain,—
They who have stood, bound to the martyr's stake,
While the sharp flames ate through the blistering skin,—
They that have bled for some high cause's sake,—
They that have perish'd for another's sin,
And from the scaffold to that God appeal'd
To whom the naked heart is all reveal'd,
Against the shortening of life's narrow span
By the blind rage and false decree of man?
And where obscurer sufferers—they who slept
And left no name on history's random page,—
But in God's book of reckoning, sternly kept,
Live on from year to year, from age to age?
The poor—the labouring poor! whose weary lives,
Through many a freezing night and hungry day,
Are a reproach to him who only strives
In luxury to waste his hours away,—
The patient poor! whose insufficient means
Make sickness dreadful, yet by whose low bed
Oft in meek prayers some fellow-sufferer leans,
And trusts in Heaven while destitute of bread;
The workhouse orphan, left without a friend;
Or weak forsaken child of want and sin,
Whose helpless life begins, as it must end,
By men disputing who shall take it in;
Who clothe, who aid that spark to linger here,
Which for mysterious purpose God hath given
To struggle through a day of toil and fear,
And meet him—with the proudest—up in Heaven!
These were, and are not:—shall we therefore deem
That they have vanish'd like a sleeper's dream?
Or that one half creation is to know
Luxurious joy, and others only woe,
And so go down into the common tomb,
With none to question their unequal doom?
Shall we give credit to a thought so fond?
Ah! no—the world beyond—the world beyond!
There, shall the desolate heart regain its own!
There, the oppress'd shall stand before God's throne!
There, when the tangled web is all explain'd,
Wrong suffer'd, pain inflicted, grief disdain'd,
Man's proud mistaken judgments and false scorn
Shall melt like mists before the uprising morn,
And holy truth stand forth serenely bright,
In the rich flood of God's eternal light!

"Then shall the Lazarus of the earth have rest—
The rich man judgment—and the grieving breast
Deep peace for ever. Therefore look thou not
So much to what on earth shall be thy lot,
As to thy fate hereafter,—to that day
When like a scroll this world shall pass away,
And what thou here hast done, or here enjoy'd,
Import but to thy *soul:*—all else destroy'd!

"And have thou faith in human nature still;
Though evil thoughts abound, and acts of ill;
Though innocence in sorrow shrouded be,
And tyranny's strong step walk bold and free!
For many a kindly generous deed is done
Which leaves no record underneath the sun,—
Self-abnegating love and humble worth,
Which yet shall consecrate our sinful earth!
He that deals blame, and yet forgets to praise,
Who sets brief storms against long summer-days,
Hath a sick judgment. Shall the usual joy
Be all forgot, and nought our minds employ,
Through the long course of ever-varying years,
But temporary pain and casual tears?
And shall we *all* condemn, and *all* distrust,
Because some men are false and some unjust?
Forbid it Heaven! far better 'twere to be
Dupe of the fond impossibility
Of light and radiance which thy vision gave
Than thus to live suspicion's bitter slave.
Give credit to thy mortal brother's heart
For all the good that in thine own hath part,
And, cheerfully as honest prudence may,
Trust to his proffer'd hand's protecting stay:
For God, who made this teeming earth so full,
And made the proud dependent on the dull—
The strong upon the weak—thereby would show
One common bond should link us all below.

"And visit not with a severer scorn
Faults, whose deep root was with our nature born
From which—though others woo'd thee just as vain—
Thou, differently tempted, didst abstain:
Nor dwell on points of creed—assuming right
To judge how holy in his Maker's sight
Is he who at a different altar bends;
For hence have risen the bitterest feuds of friends,
The wildest wars of nations; age on age
Hath desecrated thus dark history's page;
And still (though not, perhaps, with fire and sword)
Reckless we raise 'The banner of the Lord!'
Mock Heaven's calm mercy by the plea we make,
That all is done for gentle Jesus' sake,—
Disturb the consciences of weaker men,—
Employ the scholar's art, the bigot's pen,—
And rouse the wrathful and the spirit-proud
To language bitter, vehement, and loud,
Whose unconvincing fury wounds the ear,
And seeking, with some sharp and haughty sneer
How best the opposing party may be stung,—
Pleads for religion with a devil's tongue!

Digitized by Google

'Oh! shall God tolerate the meanest prayer
That humbly seeks his high supernal throne,
And man—presumptuous pharisee—declare
His fellow's voice less welcome than his own?
Is it a theme for wild and warring words
How best to satisfy the Maker's claim?
In rendering to the Lord what is the Lord's,
Doth not the thought of violence bring shame?
Think ye he gave the branching forest-tree
To furnish fagots for the funeral pyre?
Or bid his sunrise light the world, to see
Pale tortured victims perish there by fire?
No! oft on earth, dragg'd forth in pain to die,
The heretic may groan—the martyr bleed—
But, set before his Sovereign Judge on high,
'Tis man's *offence* condemns him, not his creed.
His first commandment was to worship Him:
His next—to love the creature he hath made:
How blind the eyes of those who read, how dim,
Who see not here religious fury stay'd!
From the proud *half*-fulfilment of his law
Sternly he turns away his awful face,
Nor will contentment from their service draw,
Who fail to grant a fellow creature grace.
Haply the days of martyrdom are past,
But still we see, without a visible end,
The bitter warfare of opinion last,
Tho' God hath will'd that man should be man's friend.
Therefore do thou, e'er yet thy youthful heart
Be tinged with their revilings, safe retreat,
And in those fierce discussions bear no part,—
Odious in all—in woman most unmeet,—
But in the still dark night, and rising day,
Humbly collect thy thoughts, and humbly pray.

"And be not thou cast down, because thy lot
The glory of thy dream resembleth not.
Not for herself was woman first create,
Nor yet to be man's idol, but his mate.
Still from his birth his cradled bed she tends,
The first, the last, the faithfulest of friends;
Still finds her place in sickness or in woe,
Humble to comfort, strong to undergo;
Still in the depth of weeping sorrow tries
To watch his death-bed with her patient eyes!
And doubt not thou,—(although at times deceived,
Outraged, insulted, slander'd, crush'd, and grieved;
Too often made a victim or a toy,
With years of sorrow for an hour of joy;
Too oft forgot midst pleasure's circling wiles,
Or only valued for her rosy smiles,—)
That, in the frank and generous heart of man,
The place she holds accords with Heaven's high plan;
Still, if from wandering sin reclaim'd at all,
He sees in *her* the angel of recall;
Still, in the sad and serious hours of life,
Turns to the sister, mother, friend, or wife;
Views with a heart of fond and trustful pride
His faithful partner by his calm fireside;
And oft, when barr'd of fortune's fickle grace,
Blank ruin stares him darkly in the face,
Leans his faint head upon her kindly breast,
And owns her power to soothe him into rest,—
Owns what the gift of woman's love is worth
To cheer his toils and trials upon earth!

"Sure it is much, this delegated power
To be consoler of man's heaviest hour!
The guardian angel of a life of care,
Allow'd to stand 'twixt him and his despair
Such service may be made a holy task;
And more, 'twere vain to hope, and rash to ask.
Therefore, oh! loved and lovely, be content,
And take thy lot, with joy and sorrow blent.
Judge none; yet let thy share of conduct be,
As knowing judgment shall be pass'd on thee
Here and hereafter; so, still undismay'd,
And guarded by thy sweet thoughts' tranquil shade,
Undazzled by the changeful rays which threw
Their light across thy path while life was new,
Thou shalt move sober on,—expecting less,
Therefore the more enjoying, happiness."

There was a pause: then, with a tremulous smile,
The maiden turn'd and press'd her mother's hand:—
"Shall I not bear what thou hast borne e'erwhile?
Shall I, rebellious, Heaven's high will withstand?
No! cheerly on, my wandering path I'll take,
Nor fear the destiny I did not make:
Though earthly joy grow dim—though pleasure waneth—
This thou hast taught thy child, that God remaineth!"

And from her mother's fond protecting side
She went into the world a youthful bride.

THE CREOLE GIRL;

OR, THE PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

Elle était de ce monde, où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin;
Et Rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les Roses,
L'espace d'un matin!

I.

She came to England from the island clime
Which lies beyond the far Atlantic wave;
She died in early youth—before her time—
"Peace to her broken heart, and virgin grave!"

II.

She was the child of passion, and of shame,
English her father, and of noble birth;
Though too obscure for good or evil fame,
Her unknown mother faded from the earth.

III.

And what that fair West Indian did betide,
None knew but he, who least of all might tell,—

Digitized by Google

But that she lived, and loved, and lonely died,
And sent this orphan child with him to dwell.

IV.

Oh! that a fair and innocent young face
Should have a poison in its looks alone,
To raise up thoughts of sorrow and disgrace
And shame most bitter, although not its own?

V.

Cruel were they who flung that heavy shade
Across the life whose days did but begin;
Cruel were they who crush'd her heart, and made
Her youth pay penance for *his* youth's wild sin;

VI.

Yet so it was;—among her father's friends
A cold compassion made contempt seem light,
But, in "the world," no justice e'er defends
The victims of their tortuous wrong and right:—

VII.

And "moral England," striking down the weak,
And smiling at the vices of the strong,
On her, poor child! her parent's guilt would wreak,
And that which was her grievance, made her wrong.

VIII.

The world she understood not; nor did they
Who made that world,—her, either, understand;
The very glory of her features' play
Seem'd like the language of a foreign land;

IX.

The shadowy feelings, rich and wild and warm,
That glow'd and mantled in her lovely face,—
The slight full beauty of her youthful form,
Its gentle majesty, its pliant grace,—

X.

The languid lustre of her speaking eye,
The indolent smile of that bewitching mouth,
(Which more than all betrayed her natal sky,
And left us dreaming of the sunny South,)—

XI.

The passionate variation of her blood,
Which rose and sank, as rise and sink the waves,
With every change of her most changeful mood,
Shock'd sickly fashion's pale and guarded slaves.

XII.

And so in this fair world she stood alone,
An alien 'mid the ever-moving crowd,
A wandering stranger, nameless and unknown,
Her claim to human kindness disallow'd.

XIII.

But oft would passion's bold and burning gaze,
And curiosity's set frozen stare,
Fix on her beauty in those early days,
And coarsely thus her loveliness declare:

XIV.

Which she would shrink from, as the gentle plant,
Fern-leaved Mimosa, folds itself away;
Suffering and sad;—for easy 'twas to daunt
One who on earth had no protecting stay.

XV.

And often to her eye's transparent lid
The unshed tears would rise with sudden start,
And sink again, as though by reason chid,
Back to their gentle home, her wounded heart:

XVI.

Even as some gushing fountain idly wells
Up to the prison of its marble side,
Whose power the mountain wave forever quells,—
So rose her tears—so stemm'd by virgin pride.

XVII.

And so more lonely each succeeding day,
As she her lot did better understand,
She lived a life which had in it decay,
A flower transplanted to too cold a land,—

XVIII.

Which for a while gives out a hope of bloom,
Then fades and pines, because it may not feel
The freedom and the warmth which gave it room
The beauty of its nature to reveal.

XIX.

For vainly would the heart accept its lot
And rouse its strength to bear avow'd contempt;
Scorn *will* be felt as scorn,—deserved or not,—
And from its bitter spell none stand exempt.

XX.

There is a basilisk power in human eyes
When they would look a fellow-creature down,
'Neath which the faint soul fascinated lies,
Struck by the cold sneer or the with'ring frown.

XXI.

But one there was, among that cruel crowd,
Whose nature *half* rebell'd against the chain
Which fashion flung around him; though too proud
To own that slavery's weariness and pain.

XXII.

Too proud; perhaps too weak; for custom still
Curbs with an iron bit the souls born free;
They start and chafe, yet bend them to the will
Of this most nameless ruler,—so did he.

XXIII.

And even unto *him* the worldly brand
Which rested on her, half her charm effaced;
Vainly all pure and radiant did she stand,—
Even unto *him* she was a thing disgraced.

XXIV.

Had she been early doom'd a cloister'd nun,
To Heaven devoted by a holy vow—
His union with that poor deserted one
Had seem'd not *more* impossible than now.

Digitized by Google

XXV.

He *could* have loved her—fervently and well;
But still the cold world with its false allure,
Bound his free liking in an icy spell,
And made its whole foundation insecure.

XXVI.

But not like meaner souls, would he, to prove
A vulgar admiration, her pursue;
For though his glances after her would rove,
As something beautiful, and strange, and new,

XXVII.

They were withdrawn if but her eye met his,
Or, for an instant if that light remain'd,
They soften'd into gentlest tenderness,
As asking pardon that his look had pain'd.

XXVIII.

And she was nothing unto him,—nor he
Aught unto her; but each of each did dream
In the still hours of thought, when we are free
To quit the real world for things which seem.

XXIX.

When in his heart love's folded wings would stir,
And bid his youth choose out a fitting mate,
Against his will his thoughts roam'd back to her,
And all around seem'd blank and desolate.

XXX.

When, in his worldly haunts, a smother'd sigh
Told he had won some lady of the land,
The dreaming glances of *his* earnest eye
Beheld far off the Creole orphan stand;

XXXI.

And to the beauty by his side he froze,
As though she were not fair, nor he so young,
And turn'd on her such looks of cold repose
As check'd the trembling accents of her tongue,

XXXII.

And bid her heart's dim passion seek to hide
Its gathering strength, although the task be pain,
Lest she become that mock to woman's pride—
A wretch that loves unwoo'd, and loves in vain.

XXXIII.

So in his heart she dwelt,—as one may dwell
Upon the verge of a forbidden ground;
And oft he struggled hard to break the spell
And banish her, but vain the effort found;

XXXIV.

For still along the winding way which led
Into his inmost soul, unbidden came
Her haunting form,—and he was visited
By echoes soft of her unspoken name,

XXXV

Through the long night, when those we love *seem* near,
However cold, however far away,
Borne on the wings of floating dreams, which cheer
And gives us strength to meet the struggling day.

XXXVI.

And when in twilight hours *she* roved apart,
Feeding her love-sick soul with visions fair,
The shadow of *his* eyes was on her heart,
And the smooth masses of his shining hair

XXXVII.

Rose in the glory of the evening light,
And, where she wander'd, glided evermore,
A star which beam'd upon her world's lone night
Where nothing glad had ever shone before.

XXXVIII.

But vague and girlish was that love,—no hope,
Even of familiar greeting, ever cross'd
Its innocent, but, oh! most boundless scope;
She loved him,—and she knew her love was lost.

XXXIX.

She gazed on him, as one from out a bark,
Bound onward to a cold and distant strand,
Some lovely bay, some haven fair may mark,
Stretching far inward to a sunnier land;

XL.

Who, knowing he must still sail on, turns back
To watch with dreaming and most mournful eyes
The ruffling foam which follows in his track,
Or the deep starlight of the shoreless skies.

XLI.

Oh! many a hopeless love like this may be,—
For love will live that never looks to win;
Gems rashly lost in passion's stormy sea,
Not to be lifted forth when once cast in!

* * * *

PART II.

I.

So time roll'd on, till suddenly that child
Of southern clime and feelings, droop'd and pined;
Her cheek wax'd paler, and her eye grew wild,
And from her youthful form all strength declined.

II.

'Twas then I knew her; late and vainly call'd,
To "minister unto a mind diseased,"—
When on her heart's faint sickness all things pall'd,
And the deep inward pain was never eased:

III.

Her step was always gentle, but at last
It fell as lightly as a wither'd leaf
In autumn hours; and wheresoe'er she pass'd
Smiles died away, she look'd so full of grief.

IV.

And more than ever from that world, where still
Her father hoped to place her, she would shrink

Digitized by Google

Loving to be alone, her thirst to fill
From the sweet fountains where the dreamers drink.

V.

One eve, beneath the acacia's waving bough,
Wrapt in these lonely thoughts she sate and read;
Her dark hair parted from her sunny brow,
Her graceful arm beneath her languid head;

VI.

And droopingly and sad she hung above
The open page, whereon her eyes were bent,
With looks of fond regret and pining love;
Nor heard my step, so deep was she intent.

VII.

And when she me perceived, she did not start,
But lifted up those soft dark eyes to mine,
And smiled, (that mournful smile which breaks the heart!)
Then glanced again upon the printed line.

VIII.

"What readest thou?" I ask'd. With fervent gaze,
As though she would have scann'd my inmost soul,
She turn'd to me, and, as a child obeys
The accustom'd question of revered control,

IX.

She pointed to the title of that book,
(Which, bending down, I saw was "Coralie,")
Then gave me one imploring piteous look,
And tears, too long restrain'd, gush'd fast and free.

X.

It was a tale of one, whose fate had been
Too like her own to make that weeping strange;
Like her, transplanted from a sunnier scene;
Like her, all dull'd and blighted by the change.

XI.

No further word was breathed between us two;—
No confidence was made to keep or break;—
But since that day, which pierced my soul quite through,
My hand the dying girl would faintly take,

XII.

And murmur, as its grasp (ah! piteous end!)
Return'd the feeble pressure of her own,
"Be with me to the last,—for thou, dear friend,
Hast all my struggles, all my sorrow known!"

XIII.

She died!—The pulse of that untrammell'd heart
Fainted to stillness. Those most glorious eyes
Closed on the world where she had dwelt apart,
And her cold bosom heaved no further sighs.

XIV.

She died!—and no one mourn'd, except her sire,
Who for a while look'd out with eyes more dim;
Lone was her place beside his household fire,
Vanish'd the face that ever smiled on him.

XV.

And no one said to him—"Why mournest thou?"
Because she was the unknown child of shame
(Albeit her mother better kept the vow
Of faithful love, than some who keep their fame.)

XVI.

Poor mother, and poor child!—unvalued lives!
Wan leaves that perish'd in obscurest shade!
While round me still the proud world stirs and strives,
Say, shall I weep that ye are lowly laid?

XVII.

Shall *I* mourn for ye? No!—and least for thee,
Young dreamer, whose pure heart gave way before
Thy bark was launch'd upon love's stormy sea,
Or treachery wreck'd it on the farther shore.

XVIII.

Least, least of all for thee! Thou art gone hence!
Thee never more shall scornful looks oppress,
Thee the world wrings not with some vain pretence,
Nor chills thy tears, nor mocks at thy distress.

XIX.

From man's injustice, from the cold award
Of the unfeeling, thou hast pass'd away;
Thou'rt at the gates of light where angels guard
Thy path to realms of bright eternal day.

XX.

There shall thy soul its chains of slavery burst,
There, meekly standing before God's high throne,
Thou'lt find the judgments of our earth reversed,
And answer for no errors but thine own.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

I CANNOT LOVE THEE!

I CANNOT love thee, tho' thy soul
Be one which all good thoughts control;
Altho' thy eyes be starry bright,
And the gleams of golden light
Fall upon thy silken hair,
And thy forehead, broad and fair;
Something of a cold disgust,
(Wonderful, and most unjust,)
Something of a sullen fear
Weighs my heart when thou art near;
And my soul, which cannot twine
Thought or sympathy with thine
With a coward instinct tries
To hide from thy enamour'd eyes,
Wishing for a sudden blindness
To escape those looks of kindness;
Sad she folds her shivering wings
From the love thy spirit brings,

Digitized by Google

Like a chainéd thing, caress'd
By the hand it knows the best,
By the hand which, day by day,
Visits its imprison'd stay,
Bringing gifts of fruit and blossom
From the green earth's plenteous bosom;
All but that for which it pines
In those narrow close confines,
With a sad and ceaseless sigh—
Wild and wingéd liberty!

Can it be, no instinct dwells
In th' immortal soul, which tells
That thy love, oh! human brother,
Is unwelcome to another?
Can the changeful wavering eye,
Raised to thine in forced reply,—
Can the cold constrainéd smile,
Shrinking from thee all the while,—
Satisfy thy heart, or prove
Such a likeness of true love?

Seems to me, that I should guess
By what a world of bitterness,
By what a gulf of hopeless care,
Our two hearts divided were:
Seems to me that I should know
All the dread that lurk'd below,
By the want of answer found
In the voice's trembling sound;
By the unresponsive gaze;
By the smile which vainly plays,
In whose cold imperfect birth
Glows no fondness, lives no mirth;
By the sigh, whose different tone
Hath no echo of thine own;
By the hand's cold clasp, which still
Held as not of its free will,
Shrinks, as it for freedom yearn'd;—
That my love was unreturn'd.

When thy tongue (ah! woe is me!)
Whispers love-vows tenderly,
Mine is shaping, all unheard,
Fragments of some withering word,
Which, by its complete farewell,
Shall divide us like a spell!
And my heart beats loud and fast,
Wishing that confession past;
And the tide of anguish rises,
Till its strength my soul surprises,
And the reckless words, unspoken,
Nearly have the silence broken,
With a gush like some wild river,—
"Oh! depart, depart for ever!"

But my faltering courage fails,
And my drooping spirit quails;
So sweet-earnest looks thy smile
Full of tenderness the while,
And with such strange pow'r are gifted
The eyes to which my own are lifted;
So my faint heart dies away,
And my lip can nothing say,
And I long to be alone,—
For I weep when thou art gone!

Yes, I weep, but then my soul,
Free to ponder o'er the whole,
Free from fears which check'd its thought,
And the pain thy presence brought,
Whispers me the useless lie,—
"For thy love he will not die,
Such pity is but vanity."
And I bend my weary head
O'er the tablets open spread,
Whose fair pages me invite
All I dared not say to write;
And my fingers take the pen,
And my heart feels braced again
With a resolute intent;—
But, ere yet that page be sent,
Once I view the written words
Which must break *thy* true heart's chords
And a vision, piercing bright,
Rises on my coward sight,
Of thy fond hand, gladly taking
What must set thy bosom aching;
While too soon the brittle seal
Bids the page the worst reveal,
Blending in thy eager gaze—
Scorn, and anguish, and amaze.

Powerless, then, my hand reposes
On the tablet which it closes,
With a cold and shivering sense
Born of truth's omnipotence:
And my weeping blots the leaves,
And my sinking spirit grieves,
Humbled in that bitter hour
By very consciousness of power!
What am I, that I should be
Such a source of woe to thee?
What am I, that I should dare
Thus to play with thy despair,
And persuade myself that thou
Wilt not bend beneath the blow?

Rather should my conscience move
Me to think of this vain love,
Which my life of peace beguiles,
As a tax on foolish smiles,
Which—like light not meant for one
Who, wandering in the dark alone,
Hath yet been tempted by its ray
To turn aside and lose his way—
Binds me, by their careless sin
To take the misled wanderer in.

And I praise thee, as I go,
Wandering, weary, full of woe,
To my own unwilling heart;
Cheating it to take thy part
By rehearsing each rare merit
Which thy nature doth inherit.
To myself their list I give,
Most prosaic, positive:—
How thy heart is good and true,
And thy face most fair to view;
How the powers of thy mind
Flatterers in the wisest find,
And the talents God hath given
Seem as held in trust for Heaven;
Labouring on for noble ends,—
Steady to thy boyhood's friends,—
Slow to give, or take, offence,—
Full of earnest eloquence,—

Digitized by Google

Hopeful, eager, gay of cheer,—
Frank in all thy dealings here,—
Ready to redress the wrong
Of the weak against the strong,—
Keeping up an honest pride
With those the world hath deified,
But gently bending heart and brow
To the helpless and the low;—
How, in brief, there dwells in thee
All that's generous and free,
All that may most aptly move
My spirit to an answering love.

But in vain the tale is told;
Still my heart lies dead and cold,
Still it wanders and rebels
From the thought that thus compels,
And refuses to rejoice
Save in unconstrained choice.

Therefore, when thine eyes shall read
This, my book, oh take thou heed!
In the dim lines written here,
All shall be explained and clear;
All my lips could never speak
When my heart grew coward-weak,—
All my hand could never write,
Tho' I planned it day and night,—
All shall be at length confest,
And thou'lt forgive,—and let me rest!
None but thou and I shall know
Whose the doom, and whose the woe;
None but thou and I shall share
In the secret printed there;
It shall be a secret still,
Tho' all look on it at will;
And the eye shall read in vain
What the heart cannot explain.
Each one, baffled in his turn,
Shall no more its aim discern,
Than a wanderer who might look
On some wizard's magic book,
Of the darkly-worded spell
Where deep-hidden meanings dwell.
Memory, fancy, they shall task
This sad riddle to unmask,—
Or, with bold conjectural fame,
Fit the pages with a name;—
But nothing shall they understand,
And vainly shall the stranger's hand
Essay to fling the leaves apart,
Which bear MY message to THY heart!

THE PICTURE OF SAPPHO

I.

THOU! whose impassion'd face
The painter loves to trace,
Theme of the sculptor's art and poet's story—
How many a wand'ring thought
Thy loveliness hath brought,
Warming the heart with its imagined glory!

II.

Yet, was it history's truth,
That tale of wasted youth,
Of endless grief, and love forsaken pining?
What wert thou, thou whose woe
The old traditions show
With fame's cold light around thee vainly shining?

III.

Didst thou indeed sit there
In languid lone despair—
Thy harp neglected by thee idly lying—
Thy soft and earnest gaze
Watching the lingering rays
In the far west, where summer-day was dying—

IV.

While with low rustling wings,
Among the quivering strings
The murmuring breeze faint melody was making,
As though it wooed thy hand
To strike with new command,
Or mourn'd with thee because thy heart was breaking?

V.

Didst thou, as day by day
Roll'd heavily away,
And left thee anxious, nerveless, and dejected,
Wandering thro' bowers beloved—
Roving where *he* had roved—
Yearn for his presence, as for one expected?

VI.

Didst thou, with fond wild eyes
Fix'd on the starry skies,
Wait feverishly for each new day to waken—
Trusting some glorious morn
Might witness his return,
Unwilling to believe thyself forsaken?

VII.

And when conviction came,
Chilling that heart of flame,
Didst thou, O saddest of earth's grieving daughters!
From the Leucadian steep
Dash, with a desperate leap,
And hide thyself within the whelming waters?

VIII.

Yea, in their hollow breast
Thy heart at length found rest!
The ever-moving waves above thee closing:
The winds, whose ruffling sigh
Swept the blue waters by,
Disturb'd thee not!—thou wert in peace reposing

IX.

Such is the tale they tell!
Vain was thy beauty's spell—
Vain all the praise thy song could still inspire—
Though many a happy band
Rung with less skilful hand
The borrowed love-note of thy echoing lyre.

X.

FAME, to thy breaking heart
No comfort could impart,
In vain thy brow the laurel wreath was wearing
One grief, and one alone,
Could bow thy bright head down—
Thou wert a WOMAN, and wert left despairing!

Digitized by Google

THE POET'S CHOICE.

I.

'Twas in youth, that hour of dreaming;
Round me, visions fair were beaming,
Golden fancies, brightly gleaming,
Such as start to birth
When the wandering restless mind,
Drunk with beauty, thinks to find
Creatures of a fairy kind
Realized on earth!

II.

Then, for me, in every dell
Hamadryads seem'd to dwell
(They who die, as poets tell,
Each with her own tree;)
And sweet mermaids, low reclining,
Dim light through their grottos shining,
Green weeds round their soft limbs twining,
Peopled the deep sea.

III.

Then, when moon and stars were fair,
Nymph-like visions fill'd the air,
With blue wings and golden hair
Bending from the skies;
And each cave by echo haunted
In its depth of shadow granted,
Brightly, the Egeria wanted,
To my eager eyes.

IV.

But those glories pass'd away;
Earth seem'd left to dull decay,
And my heart in sadness lay,
Desolate, uncheer'd;
Like one wrapt in painful sleeping,
Pining, thirsting, waking, weeping,
Watch thro' life's dark midnight keeping,
Till thy form appear'd!

V.

Then my soul, whose erring measure
Knew not where to find true pleasure,
Woke and seized the golden treasure
Of thy human love;
And, looking on thy radiant brow,
My lips in gladness breathed the vow
Which angels, not more fair than thou,
Have register'd above.

VI.

And now I take my quiet rest,
With my head upon thy breast,
I will make no further quest
In fancy's realms of light,
Fay, nor nymph, nor winged spirit,
Shall my store of love inherit;
More thy mortal charm doth merit
Than dream, however bright.

VII.

And my soul, like some sweet bird
Whose song at summer eve is heard,
When the breeze, so lightly stirr'd,
Leaves the branch unbent,—
Sits and all triumphant sings,
Folding up her brooding wings,
And gazing out on earthly things
With a calm content.

THE HUNTING-HORN OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Among other relics preserved in the Cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle is the ivory hunting-horn of Charlemagne. It is massive and heavy, and the attempt of the guide to sound it (for the amusement of tourists and strangers) is singularly unsuccessful, the note produced being the most faint and lugubrious which it is possible to conceive.

Sound not the Horn!—the guarded relic keep:
A faithful sharer of its master's sleep:
His life it gladden'd—to his life belong'd,—
Pause—ere thy lip the royal dead hath wrong'd.
Its weary weight but mocks thy feeble hand;
Its desolate note, the shrine wherein we stand.
Not such the sound it gave in days of yore,
When that rich belt a monarch's bosom wore,—
Not such the sound! Far over hill and dell
It waked the echoes with triumphant swell;
Heard midst the rushing of the torrent's fall.
From castle crag to roofless ruin'd hall,
Down the ravine's precipitous descent,
Thro' the wild forest's rustling boughs it went,
Upon the lake's blue bosom linger'd fond,
And faintly answer'd from the hills beyond.

Pause!—the free winds that joyous blast have borne:—
Dead is the hunter!—silent be the horn!

Sound not the horn! Bethink thee of the day
When to the chase an emperor led the way;
In all the pride of manhood's noblest prime,
Untamed by sorrow, and untired by time,
Life's pulses throbbing in his eager breast,
Glad, active, vigorous,—who is now at rest:—
How he gazed round him with his eagle eye,
Leapt the dark rocks that frown against the sky,
Grasp'd the long spear, and curb'd the panting steed
(Whose fine nerves quiver with his headlong speed,)
At the wild cry of danger smiled in scorn,
And firmly sounded that re-echoing horn!

Ah! let no touch the ivory tube profane
Which drank the breath of *living* Charlemagne:
Let not like blast by meaner lips be blown,
But by the hunter's side the horn lay down!

Or, following to his palace, dream we now
Not of the hunter's strength, or forest bough,
But woman's love! Her offering this, per chance,—
This, granted to each stranger's casual glance,
This, gazed upon with coldly curious eyes,
Was giv'n with blushes, and received with sighs!

Digitized by Google

We see her not;—no mournful angel stands
To guard her love-gift from our careless hands;
But fancy brings a vision to our view—
A woman's form, the trusted and the true:
The strong to suffer, tho' so weak to dare,
Patient to watch through many a day of care,
Devoted, anxious, generous, void of guile,
And with her whole heart's welcome in her smile;
Even such I see! Her maidens, too, are there,
And wake, with chorus sweet, some native air;
But tho' her proud heart holds her country dear,
And tho' she loves those happy songs to hear,
She bids the tale be hush'd, the harp be still,
For one faint blast that dies along the hill.
Up, up, she springs; her young head backward thrown;
"He comes! my hunter comes!—Mine own—mine own!"

She loves, and she is loved—her gift is worn—
'Tis fancy, all!—And yet—lay down the horn!

Love—life—what are ye?—since to love and live
No surer record to our times can give!
Low lies the hero now, whose spoken name
Could fire with glory, or with love inflame;
Low lies the arm of might, the form of pride,
And dim tradition dreameth by his side.
Desolate stand those painted palace-halls,
And gradual ruin mines the massy walls,
Where frank hearts greeted many a welcome guest,
And loudly rang the beaker and the jest;—
While *here*, within this chapel's narrow bound,
Whose frozen silence startles to the sound
Of stranger voices ringing thro' the air,
Or faintly echoes many a humble prayer;
Here, where the window, narrow arch'd, and high,
With jealous bars shuts out the free blue sky,—
Where glimmers down, with various-painted ray,
A prison'd portion of God's glorious day,—
Where never comes the breezy breath of morn,
Here, mighty hunter, feebly wakes thy horn!

TO FERDINAND SEYMOUR.

Rosy child, with forehead fair,
Coral lip, and shining hair,
In whose mirthful clever eyes
Such a world of gladness lies;
As thy loose curls idly straying
O'er thy mother's cheek, while playing,
Blend her soft lock's shadowy twine
With the glittering light of thine,—
Who shall say, who gazes now,
Which is fairest, she or thou?

In sweet contrast are ye met,
Such as heart could ne'er forget:
Thou art brilliant as a flower,
Crimsoning in the sunny hour;
Merry as a singing-bird,
In the green wood sweetly heard;
Restless as if fluttering wings
Bore thee on thy wanderings;
Ignorant of all distress,
Full of childhood's carelessness.

She is gentle; she hath known
Something of the echoed tone
Sorrow leaves, where'er it goes,
In this world of many woes.
On her brow such shadows are
As the faint cloud gives the star,
Veiling its most holy light,
Tho' it still be pure and bright;
And the colour in her cheek
To the hue on thine is weak,
Save when flush'd with sweet surprise,
Sudden welcomes light her eyes;
And her softly chisel'd face
(But for living, moving grace)
Looks like one of those which beam
In th' Italian painter's dream,—
Some beloved Madonna, bending
O'er the infant she is tending;
Holy, bright, and undefiled
Mother of the Heaven-born child;
Who, tho' painted strangely fair,
Seems but made for holy prayer,
Pity, tears, and sweet appeal,
And fondness such as angels feel;
Baffling earthly passion's sigh
With serenest majesty!

Oh! may those enshrouded years
Whose fair dawn alone appears,
May that brightly budding life,
Knowing yet nor sin nor strife,—
Bring its store of hoped-for joy,
Mother, to thy laughing boy!
And the good thou dost impart
Lie deep-treasured in his heart,
That, when he at length shall strive
In the bad world where we live,
Thy sweet name may still be blest
As one who taught his soul true rest!

Maiden-Bradley, 1838.

THE MOTHER'S HEART.

I.

When first thou camest, gentle, shy, and fond,
My eldest-born, first hope, and dearest treasure,
My heart received thee with a joy beyond
All that it yet had felt of earthly pleasure;
Nor thought that *any* love again might be
So deep and strong as that I felt for thee.

II.

Faithful and true, with sense beyond thy years,
And natural piety that lean'd to Heaven;
Wrung by a harsh word suddenly to tears,
Yet patient of rebuke when justly given—
Obedient—easy to be reconciled—
And meekly cheerful—such wert thou, my child.

III.

Not willing to be left; still by my side
Haunting my walks, while summer-day was dying;—

Digitized by Google

Nor leaving in thy turn; but pleased to glide
Thro' the dark room where I was sadly lying,
Or by the couch of pain, a sitter meek,
Watch the dim eye, and kiss the feverish cheek.

IV.

O boy! of such as thou are oftenest made
Earth's fragile idols; like a tender flower,
No strength in all thy freshness,—prone to fade,—
And bending weakly to the thunder-shower,—
Still, round the loved, thy heart found force to bind,
And clung, like woodbine shaken in the wind!

V.

Then THOU, my merry love;—bold in thy glee,
Under the bough, or by the firelight dancing,
With thy sweet temper, and thy spirit free,
Didst come, as restless as a bird's wing glancing,
Full of a wild and irrepressible mirth,
Like a young sunbeam to the gladden'd earth!

VI.

Thine was the shout! the song! the burst of joy!
Which sweet from childhood's rosy lip resoundeth;
Thine was the eager spirit nought could cloy,
And the glad heart from which all grief reboundeth;
And many a mirthful jest and mock reply,
Lurk'd in the laughter of thy dark blue eye!

VII.

And thine was many an art to win and bless,
The cold and stern to joy and fondness warming;
The coaxing smile;—the frequent soft caress;—
The earnest tearful prayer all wrath disarming!
Again my heart a new affection found,
But thought that love with *thee* had reach'd its bound.

VIII.

At length THOU, camest; thou, the last and least;
Nick-named "The Emperor" by thy laughing brothers,
Because a haughty spirit swell'd thy breast,
And thou didst seek to rule and sway the others;
Mingling with every playful infant wile
A mimic majesty that made us smile:—

IX.

And oh! most like a regal child wert thou!
An eye of resolute and successful scheming!
Fair shoulders—curling lip—and dauntless brow—
Fit for the world's strife, not for Poet's dreaming:
And proud the lifting of thy stately head,
And the firm bearing of thy conscious tread.

X.

Different from both! Yet each succeeding claim,
I, that all other love had been forswearing,
Forthwith admitted, equal and the same;
Nor injured either, by this love's comparing,
Nor stole a fraction for the newer call—
But in the mother's heart, found room for ALL!

THE BLIND MAN'S BRIDE.

I.

WHEN first, beloved, in vanish'd hours
The blind man sought thy love to gain,
They said thy cheek was bright as flowers
New freshen'd by the summer rain:
They said thy movements, swift yet soft,
Were such as make the winged dove
Seem, as it gently soars aloft,
The image of repose and love.

I.

They told me, too, an eager crowd
Of wooers praised thy beauty rare,
But that thy heart was all too proud
A common love to meet or share.
Ah! thine was neither pride nor scorn,
But in thy coy and virgin breast
Dwelt preference, not of PASSION born,
The love that hath a holier rest!

III.

Days came and went;—thy step I heard
Pause frequent, as it pass'd me by:—
Days came and went;—thy heart was still,
And answer'd to my stifled sigh!
And thou didst make a humble choice,
Content to be the blind man's bride,
Who loved thee for thy gentle voice,
And own'd no joy on earth beside.

IV.

And well by that sweet voice I knew
(Without the happiness of sight)
Thy years, as yet, were glad and few,—
Thy smile, most innocently bright:
I knew how full of love's own grace
The beauty of thy form must be;
And fancy idolized the face
Whose loveliness I might not see!

V.

Oh! happy were those days, beloved!
I almost ceased for light to pine
When thro' the summer vales we roved,
Thy fond hand gently link'd in mine.
Thy soft "Good night" still sweetly cheer'd
The unbroken darkness of my doom;
And thy "Good morrow, love," endear'd
Each sunrise that return'd in gloom!

VI.

At length, as years roll'd swiftly on,
They spoke to me of time's decay—
Of roses from thy smooth cheek gone,
And ebon ringlets turn'd to gray.
Ah! then I *bless'd* the sightless eyes
Which could not feel the deepening shade,
Nor watch beneath succeeding skies
Thy withering beauty faintly fade

VII.

I saw no paleness on thy cheek,
No lines upon thy forehead smooth,—

Digitized by Google

But still the BLIND MAN heard thee *speak*
In accents made to bless and soothe:
Still he could feel thy guided hand
As through the woodlands wild we ranged—
Still in the summer light could stand,
And know thy HEART and VOICE unchanged.

VIII.

And still, beloved, till life grows cold,
We'll wander 'neath a genial sky,
And only know that we are old
By counting happy years gone by:
For thou to *me* art still as fair
As when those happy years began,
When first thou cam'st to soothe and share
The sorrows of a sightless man!

IX.

Old Time, who changes all below,
To wean men gently from the grave,
Hath brought US no increase of woe,
And leaves us all he ever gave:
For I am still a helpless thing,
Whose darkened world is cheered by thee—
And thou art she whose beauty's spring
The blind man vainly yearned to see!

THE FALLEN LEAVES.

WE stand among the fallen leaves,
Young children at our play,
And laugh to see the yellow things
Go rustling on their way:
Right merrily we hunt them down,
The autumn winds and we,
Nor pause to gaze where snow-drifts lie,
Or sunbeams gild the tree:
With dancing feet we leap along
Where withered boughs are strown;
Nor past nor future checks our song—
The present is our own.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In youth's enchanted spring—
When Hope (who wearies at the last)
First spreads her eagle wing.
We tread with steps of conscious strength
Beneath the leafless trees,
And the color kindles on our cheek
As blows the winter breeze;
While, gazing toward the cold gray sky,
Clouded with snow and rain,
We wish the old year all past by,
And the young spring come again.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In manhood's haughty prime—
When first our pausing hearts begin
To love "the olden time;"
And, as we gaze, we sigh to think
How many a year hath passed
Since 'neath those cold and faded trees
Our footsteps wandered last;
And old companions—now perchance
Estranged, forgot, or dead—
Come round us, as those autumn leaves
Are crushed beneath our tread.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In our *own* autumn day—
And, tott'ring on with feeble steps,
Pursue our cheerless way.
We look not back—too long ago
Hath all we loved been lost;
Nor forward—for we may not live
To see our new hope crossed:
But on we go—the sun's faint beam
A feeble warmth imparts—
Childhood without its joy returns—
The present fills our hearts!

THE ARAB TO HIS FAVORITE STEED.

MY beautiful! my beautiful! that standest meekly by,
With thy proudly arched and glossy neck, and dark and fiery eye,
Fret not to roam the desert now, with all thy wingèd speed;
I may not mount on thee again—thou'rt sold, my Arab steed!
Fret not with that impatient hoof—snuff not the breezy wind—
The farther that thou fliest now, so far am I behind;
The stranger hath thy bridle-rein—thy master hath *his* gold—
Fleet-limbed and beautiful, farewell; thou'rt sold my steed, thou'rt sold.

Farewell! those free, untirèd limbs full many a mile must roam,
To reach the chill and wintry sky which clouds the stranger's home;
Some other hand, less fond, must now thy corn and bed prepare,
Thy silky mane, I braided once, must be another's care!
The morning sun shall dawn again, but never more with thee
Shall I gallop through the desert paths, where we were wont to be;
Evening shall darken on the earth, and o'er the sandy plain
Some other steed, with slower step, shall bear me home again.

Yes, thou must go; the wild, free breeze, the brilliant sun and sky,
Thy master's house—from all of these my exiled one must fly;
Thy proud dark eye will grow less proud, thy step become less fleet,
And vainly shalt thou arch thy neck, thy master's hand to meet.
Only in sleep shall I behold that dark eye glancing bright—
Only in sleep shall hear again that step so firm and light;
And when I raise my dreaming arm to check or cheer thy speed,
Then must I, starting, wake to feel—thou'rt *sold*, my Arab steed!

Digitized by Google

Ah! rudely, then, unseen by me, some cruel hand may chide,
Till foam-wreaths lie, like crested waves, along thy panting side:
And the rich blood that's in thee swells, in thy indignant pain,
Till careless eyes, which rest on thee, may count each starting vein.
Will they ill-use thee? If I thought—but no, it cannot be—
Thou art so swift, yet easy curbed; so gentle, yet so free:
And yet, if haply, when thou'rt gone, my lonely heart should yearn—
Can the hand which casts thee from it now command thee to return?

Return! alas! my Arab steed! what shall thy master do,
When thou, who wast his all of joy, hast vanished from his view?
When the dim distance cheats mine eye, and through the gathering tears
Thy bright form, for a moment, like the false mirage appears;
Slow and unmounted shall I roam, with weary step alone,
Where, with fleet step and joyous bound, thou oft hast borne me on;
And sitting down by that green well, I'll pause and sadly think,
"It was here he bowed his glossy neck when last I saw him drink!"

When last I saw thee drink! Away! the fevered dream is o'er—
I could not live a day, and *know* that we should meet no more!
They tempted me, my beautiful!—for hunger's power is strong—
They tempted me, my beautiul! but I have loved too long.
Who said that I had given thee up? who said that thou wast sold?
'Tis false—'tis false, my Arab steed! I fling them back their gold!
Thus, *thus*, I leap upon thy back, and scour the distant plains;
Away! who overtakes us now shall claim thee for his pains!

WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS TOGETHER.

We have been friends together,
In sunshine and in shade;
Since first beneath the chestnut-trees
In infancy we played.
But coldness dwells within thy heart—
A cloud is on thy brow;
We have been friends together—
Shall a light word part us now?

We have been gay together;
We have laughed at little jests;
For the fount of hope was gushing,
Warm and joyous, in our breasts.
But laughter now hath fled thy lip,
And sullen glooms thy brow;
We have been gay together—
Shall a light word part us now?

We have been sad together—
We have wept, with bitter tears,
O'er the grass-grown graves, where slumbered
The hopes of early years.
The voices which are silent there
Would bid thee clear thy brow;
We have been sad together—
Oh! what shall part us now?

ALLAN PERCY.

It was a beauteous lady richly dressed;
Around her neck are chains of jewels rare;
A velvet mantle shrouds her snowy breast,
And a young child is softly slumbering there.
In her own arms, beneath that glowing sun,
She bears him onward to the greenwood tree.
Is the dun heath, thou fair and thoughtless one,
The place where an earl's son should cradled be?
Lullaby!

Though a proud earl be father to my child,
Yet on the sward my blessed babe shall lie;
Let the winds lull him with their murmurs wild,
And toss the green boughs upward to the sky.
Well knows the earl how long my spirit pined.
I loved a forester, glad, bold, and free;
And had I wedded as my heart inclined,
My child were cradled 'neath the greenwood tree.
Lullaby!

Slumber thou still, my innocent—mine own,
While I call back the dreams of other days.
In the deep forest I feel less alone
Than where those palace splendors mock my gaze.
Fear not! my arm shall bear thee safely back;
I need no squire, no page with bended knee,
To bear my baby through the wildwood track,
Where Allan Percy used to roam with me.
Lullaby!

Here I can sit; and while the fresh wind blows,
Waving the ringlets of thy shining hair,
Giving thy cheek a deeper tinge of rose,
I can dream dreams that comfort my despair;
I can make visions of a different home,
Such as we hoped in other days might be;
There no proud earl's unwelcome footsteps come—
There, Allan Percy, I am safe with thee!
Lullaby!

Thou art mine own—I'll bear thee where I list,
Far from the dull, proud tower and donjon-keep;
From my long hair the pearl-chains I'll untwist,
And with a peasant's heart sit down and weep.
Thy glittering 'broidered robe, my precious one,
Changed for a simpler covering shall be;
And I will dream thee Allan Percy's son,
And think poor Allan guards thy sleep with me.
Lullaby!

Digitized by Google

JAMES BALLANTINE.

James Ballantine was born in Edinburgh in 1808. His father died in 1818, and the boy and his three sisters were educated almost entirely by their mother. James was apprenticed to a house-painter, and became a good workman. At the age of twenty he studied anatomy for a while at the University of Edinburgh. Subsequently he learned the art of painting on glass; and it is said that the recent revival of that art in Great Britain is due almost entirely to his taste and skill, and his archæological researches. On a public competition, his designs for the windows of the House of Lords were adopted, and the execution of the work was entrusted to him. He has published a work on stained glass.

At about the age of sixteen Ballantine began to publish short poems. His "Gaberlunzie's Wallet," which contained some of his best lyrics, appeared in monthly numbers in 1843, and subsequently his "Miller of Deanhaugh." An edition of his poems was published in Edinburgh in 1856.

NAEBODY'S BAIRN.

She was Naebody's bairn, she was Naebody's bairn,
She had mickle to thole, she had mickle to learn,
Afore a kind word or kind look she could earn,
For naebody cared about Naebody's bairn.

Though faither or mither ne'er own'd her ava,
Though rear'd by the fremmit for fee unco sma',
She grew in the shade like a young lady-fern,
For Nature was bounteous to Naebody's bairn.

Though toited by some, and though lightlied by mair,
She never compleened, though her young heart was sair,
And warm virgin tears that might melted cauld airn
Whiles glist in the blue ee o' Naebody's bairn.

Though nane cheer'd her childhood, an' nane hail'd her birth,
Heaven sent her an angel to gladden the earth;
And when the earth doom'd her in laigh nook to dern,
Heaven couldna but tak' again Naebody's bairn.

She cam smiling sweetly as young mornin' daw,
Like lown simmer gloamin' she faded awa'
And lo! how serenely that lone e'ening stern
Shines on the greensward that haps Naebody's bairn!

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

The bonnie, bonnie bairn sits pokin' in the ase,
Glowerin' in the fire wi' his wee round face;
Laughin' at the fuffin' lowe—what sees he there?
Ha! the young dreamer's biggin' castles in the air!

His wee chubby face, an' his towzy curly pow,
Are laughin' an' noddin' to the dancin' lowe;
He'll brown his rosy cheeks, and singe his sunny hair,
Glowerin' at the imps wi' their castles in the air.

He sees muckle castles towerin' to the moon,
He sees little sodgers puin' them a' doun;
Warlds whomlin' up an' doun, blazin' wi' a flare,
Losh! how he loups, as they glimmer in the air.

For a' sae sage he looks, what can the laddie ken?
He's thinkin' upon naething, like mony mighty men;
A wee thing mak's us think, a sma' thing mak's us stare—
There are mair folks than him biggin' castles in the air.

Sic a night in winter may weel mak' him cauld;
His chin upon his buffy hand will soon mak' him auld;
His brow is brent sae braid, oh, pray that Daddy Care
Wad let the wean alane wi' his castles in the air.

He'll glower at the fire, an' he'll keek at the light;
But mony sparkling stars are swallow'd up by night;
Aulder een than his are glamour'd by a glare,
Hearts are broken—heads are turn'd—wi' castles in the air.

ILKA BLADE O' GRASS KEPS ITS AIN DRAP O' DEW.

Confide ye aye in Providence, for Providence is kind,
An' bear ye a' life's changes wi' a calm an' tranquil mind;

Digitized by Google

Though press'd an' hemm'd on every side, ha'e faith an' ye'll win through,
For ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

Gin reft frae friends, or cross'd in love, as whiles nae doubt ye've been,
Grief lies deep-hidden in your heart, or tears flow frae your een,
Believe it for the best, and trow there's good in store for you,
For ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

In lang, lang days o' simmer when the clear and cludless sky
Refuses ae wee drap o' rain to Nature parch'd and dry,
The genial night, wi' balmy breath, gars verdure spring anew,
An' ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

Sae lest 'mid fortune's sunshine we should feel ower proud an' hie,
An' in our pride forget to wipe the tear frae poortith's ee,
Some wee dark cluds o' sorrow come, we ken na whence or hoo,
But ilka blade o' grass keps its ain drap o' dew.

WIFIE, COME HAME.

Wifie, come hame,
My couthie wee dame!
Oh, but ye're far awa',
Wifie, come hame!
Come wi' the young bloom o' morn on thy broo,
Come wi' the lown star o' love in thine ee,
Come wi' the red cherries ripe on thy mou',
A' glist wi' balm, like the dew on the lea.
Come wi' the gowd tassels fringin' thy hair,
Come wi' thy rose cheeks a' dimpled wi' glee,
Come wi' thy wee step, and wifie-like air—
Oh, quickly come, and shed blessings on me!

Wifie, come hame,
My couthie wee dame!
Oh, my heart wearies sair,
Wifie, come hame!
Come wi' our love-pledge, our dear little dawtie,
Clasping my neck round, an' clamb'rin' my knee;
Come let me nestle and press the wee pettie,
Gazing on ilka sweet feature o' thee.
Oh, but the house is a cauld hame without ye,
Lanely and eerie's the life that I dree;
Oh, come awa', an' I'll dance round about ye,
Ye'll ne'er again win frae my arms till I dee.

THE BIRDIE SURE TO SING IS AYE THE GORBEL O' THE NEST.

Oh, dinna look ye pridefu' doon on a' aneath your ken,
For he wha seems the farthest but aft wins the farthest ben;
And whiles the doubie o' the school tak's lead o' a' the rest,
The birdie sure to sing is aye the gorbel o' the nest.

The cauld grey misty morn aft brings a sultry sunny day;
The trees wha's buds are latest are the langest to decay;
The heart sair tried wi' sorrow aye endures the sternest test—
The birdie sure to sing is aye the gorbel o' the nest.

The wee, wee stern that glints in heaven may be a lowin' sun,
Though like a speck o' light, scarce seen amid the welkin dun;
The humblest sodger on the field may win the warrior's crest—
The birdie sure to sing is aye the gorbel o' the nest.

Then dinna be impatient wi' your bairnie when he's slow,
And dinna scorn the humble, though the world deem them low;
The hindmost and the feeblest aft become the first and best—
The birdie sure to sing is aye the gorbel o' the nest.

CREEP AFORE YE GANG.

Creep awa', my bairnie, creep afore ye gang;
Cock ye baith your lugs to your auld grannie's sang;
Gin ye gang as far ye will think the road lang,
Creep awa', my bairnie—creep afore ye gang.

Creep awa', my bairnie, ye're ower young to learn
To tot up and down yet, my bonnie wee bairn;
Better creepin' cannie, than fa'in' wi' a bang,
Duntin' a' your wee brow—creep afore ye gang.

Ye'll creep, an' ye'll laugh, an' ye'll nod to your mither,
Watchin' ilka step o' your wee dousy brither;
Rest ye on the floor till your wee limbs grow strang,
An' ye'll be a braw chiel' yet—creep afore ye gang.

The wee birdie fa's when it tries ower soon to flee;
Folks are sure to tumble when they climb ower hie;
They wha dinna walk right are sure to come to wrang—
Creep awa', my bairnie—creep afore ye gang.

THE NAMELESS LASSIE.

There's nane may ever guess or trow my bonnie lassie's name,
There's nane may ken the humble cot my lassie ca's her hame;
Yet though my lassie's nameless, an' her kin o' low degree,
Her heart is warm, her thochts are pure, and oh! she's dear to me.

Digitized by Google

She's gentle and she's bonnie, an' she's modest as she's fair,
Her virtues, like her beauties a', are varied as they're fare;
While she is light an' merry as the lammie on the lea—
For happiness an' innocence thegether aye maun be!

Whene'er she shows her blooming face, the flowers may cease to blaw,
An' when she opes her hinnied lips, the air is music a';
But when wi' other's sorrow touch'd, the tear starts to her ee,
Oh! that's the gem in beauty's crown, the priceless pearl to me.

Within my soul her form's enshrin'd, her heart is a' my ain,
An' richer prize or purer bliss nae mortal e'er can gain;
The darkest paths o' life I tread wi' steps o' bounding glee,
Cheer'd onward by the love that lichts my nameless lassie's ee.

BONNIE BONALY.

Bonnie Bonaly's wee fairy-led stream
Murmurs and sobs like a child in a dream;
Falling where silver light gleams on its breast,
Gliding through nooks where the dark shadows rest,
Flooding with music its own tiny valley,
Dances in gladness the stream o' Bonaly.

Proudly Bonaly's grey-browed castle towers,
Bounded by mountains, and bedded in flowers;
Here hangs the blue-bell, and there waves the broom;
Nurtured by art, rarest garden-sweets bloom;
Heather and thyme scent the breezes that dally,
Playing among the green knolls o' Bonaly.

Pentland's high hills raise their heather-crowned crest,
Peerless Edina expands her white breast,
Beauty and grandeur are blent in the scene,
Bonnie Bonaly lies smiling between;
Nature and Art, like fair twins, wander gayly;
Friendship and love dwell in bonnie Bonaly.

SAFT IS THE BLINK O' THINE EE, LASSIE.

Oh, saft is the blink o' thine ee, lassie,
Saft is the blink o' thine ee;
An' a bonnie wee sun glimmers in its blue orb,
As kindly it glints upon me.

The ringlets that twine round thy brow, lassie,
Are gowden, as gowden may be;
Like the wee curly cluds that play round the sun,
When he's just going to drap in the sea.

Thou hast a bonnie wee mou', lassie,
As sweet as a body may pree;
And fondly I'll pree that wee hinny mou',
E'en though thou shouldst frown upon me.

Thou hast a lily-white hand, lassie,
As fair as a body may see;
An' saft is the touch o' that wee genty hand,
At e'en when thou partest wi' me.

Thy thochts are sae haly and pure, lassie,
Thy heart is sae kind and sae free;
My bosom is flooded wi' sunshine an' joy,
Wi' ilka blythe blink o' thine ee.

THE MAIR THAT YE WORK, AYE THE MAIR WILL YE WIN.

Be eident, be eident, fleet time rushes on,
Be eident, be eident, bricht day will be gone:
To stand idle by is a profitless sin:
The mair that ye work, aye the mair will ye win.

The earth gathers fragrance while nursing the flower,
The wave waxes stronger while feeding the shower,
The stream gains in speed as it sweeps o'er the linn:
The mair that ye work, aye the mair will ye win.

There's nought got by idling, there's nought got for nought—
Health, wealth, and contentment, by labor are bought;
In raising yoursel', ye may help up your kin:
The mair that ye work, aye the mair will ye win.

Let every man aim in his heart to excel,
Let every man ettle to fend for himsel';
Aye nourish ye stern independence within:
The mair that ye work, aye the mair will ye win.

AE GUDE TURN DESERVES ANITHER.

Ye maunna be proud, although ye be great,
The puirest bodie is still your brither;
The king may come in the cadger's gate—
Ae gude turn deserves anither.

The hale o' us rise frae the same cauld clay,
Ae hour we bloom, ae hour we wither;
Let ilk help ither to climb the brae—
Ae gude turn deserves anither.

The highest among us are unco wee,
Frae Heaven we get a' our gifts thegither,
Hoard na, man, what ye get sae free!—
Ae gude turn deserves anither.

Life is a weary journey alane,
Blythe's the road when we wend wi' ither;
Mutual gi'eing is mutual gain—
Ae gude turn deserves anither.

Digitized by Google

HORATIUS BONAR.

HORATIUS BONAR was born in Edinburgh, December 19, 1808. His ancestors for several generations were ministers of the Church of Scotland. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh, was for some time a missionary at Leith, and was ordained at Kelso in 1837. His publications, mainly poetical and devotional, are numerous; they include "The Night of Weeping," "The Morning of Joy," "The Eternal Day," "God's Way of Peace," "Lyra Consolationis," and "Hymns of Faith and Hope." The last named is his most popular work, and has been extended to three series. Dr. Bonar has also published two books of travels in the Holy Land. He is now (1875) pastor of the Chalmers Memorial Free Church, in Edinburgh.

A LITTLE WHILE.

BEYOND the smiling and the weeping
I shall be soon;
Beyond the waking and the sleeping,
Beyond the sowing and the reaping,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the blooming and the fading
I shall be soon;
Beyond the shining and the shading,
Beyond the hoping and the dreading,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the rising and the setting
I shall be soon;
Beyond the calming and the fretting,
Beyond remembering and forgetting,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the gathering and the strowing
I shall be soon;
Beyond the ebbing and the flowing,
Beyond the coming and the going,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the parting and the meeting
I shall be soon;
Beyond the farewell and the greeting,
Beyond this pulse's fever beating,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

Beyond the frost-chain and the fever
I shall be soon;
Beyond the rock-waste and the river,
Beyond the ever and the never,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home!
Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come.

IS THIS ALL?

SOMETIMES I catch sweet glimpses of his face,
But that is all.
Sometimes he looks on me, and seems to smile,
But that is all.
Sometimes he speaks a passing word of peace,
But that is all.
Sometimes I think I hear his loving voice
Upon me call.

And is this all he meant when thus he spoke,
"Come unto me?"
Is there no deeper, more enduring rest
In him for thee?
Is there no steadier light for thee in him?
Oh, come and see!

Oh, come and see! Oh, look, and look again!
All shall be right;
Oh, taste his love, and see that it is good,
Thou child of night!
Oh, trust thou, trust thou in his grace and power!
Then all is bright.

Nay, do not wrong him by thy heavy thoughts,
But love his love.
Do thou full justice to his tenderness,
His mercy prove;
Take him for what he is; oh, take him all,
And look above!

Then shall thy tossing soul find anchorage
And steadfast peace;
Thy love shall rest on his; thy weary doubts
Forever cease.
Thy heart shall find in him and in his grace
Its rest and bliss!

Digitized by Google

Christ and his love shall be thy blessed all
For evermore!
Christ and his light shall shine on all thy ways
For evermore!
Christ and his peace shall keep thy troubled soul
For evermore!

THE MEETING-PLACE.

Where the faded flower shall freshen,
Freshen nevermore to fade;
Where the shaded sky shall brighten—
Brighten never more to shade:
Where the sun-blaze never scorches,
Where the star-beams cease to chill;
Where no tempest stirs the echoes
Of the wood, or wave, or hill:
Where the morn shall wake in gladness,
And the noon the joy prolong,
Where the daylight dies in fragrance,
'Mid the burst of holy song:
Brother, we shall meet and rest
'Mid the holy and the blest!

Where no shadow shall bewilder,
Where life's vain parade is o'er,
Where the sleep of sin is broken,
And the dreamer dreams no more;
Where the bond is never severed,
Partings, claspings, sob and moan,
Midnight waking, twilight weeping,
Heavy noontide, all are done:
Where the child has found its mother,
Where the mother finds the child,
Where dear families are gathered
That were scattered on the wild:
Brother, we shall meet and rest
'Mid the holy and the blest!

Where the hidden wound is healèd,
Where the blighted life reblooms,
Where the smitten heart the freshness
Of its buoyant youth resumes;
Where the love that here we lavish
On the withering leaves of time,
Shall have fadeless flowers to fix on
In an ever spring-bright clime:
Where we find the joy of loving,
As we never loved before,
Loving on, unchilled, unhindered,
Loving once and evermore:
Brother, we shall meet and rest.
'Mid the holy and the blest!

Where a blasted world shall brighten
Underneath a bluer sphere,
And a softer, gentler sunshine
Shed its healing splendor here;
Where earth's barren vales shall blossom,
Putting on their robe of green,
And a purer, fairer Eden
Be where only wastes have been:
Where a king in kingly glory,
Such as earth has never known,
Shall assume the righteous sceptre,
Claim and wear the holy crown:
Brother, we shall meet and rest
'Mid the holy and the blest!

BRIGHT FEET OF MAY.

Trip along, bright feet of May,
Trip along from day to day,
Trip along in sun and showers,
Trip along and wake the flowers.
Trip along the breezy hills,
Trip beside the gathering rills;
Trip along in light and song,
Trip away, all bright and gay,
Trip away, bright feet of May.

Trip along when morning shines,
Trip along when day declines,
Trip along when in the night
Moon and stars are sparkling bright;
Trip across the sunny sea,
Over cloud-land high and free;
Trip along, in light and song,
Trip away, all fresh and gay,
Trip away, bright feet of May.

Trip along the budding wood,
O'er the moorland solitude;
Trip through garden, field, and brake,
Trip beside the gleaming lake;
Revel in the star-loved dew,
Drink the clear sky's summer blue;
Trip along, in light and song,
Trip away, all fresh and gay,
Trip away, bright feet of May.

Trip along, and as you move,
Fill the springing earth of love;
Fill of love the sunlight free,
Fill of love the bounding sea;
The love of Him who gave to May
The sweetness of its smiling day.
Trip along, in light and song,
Trip away, all fresh and gay,
Trip away, bright feet of May.

ALL WELL.

No seas again shall sever,
No desert intervene;
No deep, sad-flowing river
Shall roll its tide between.

No bleak cliffs, upward towering,
Shall bound our eager sight;
No tempest, darkly lowering,
Shall wrap us in its night.

Love, and unsevered union
Of soul with those we love,
Nearness and glad communion,
Shall be our joy above.

No dread of wasting sickness,
No thought of ache or pain,
No fretting hours of weakness,
Shall mar our peace again.

No death, our homes o'ershading,
Shall e'er our harps unstring;
For all is life unfading
In presence of our King.

Digitized by Google

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES.

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES was born in Yorkshire, June 19, 1809. He was educated at Cambridge, graduating at Trinity College in 1831. Six years later he entered Parliament as member for Pontefract, which he continued to represent till August 20, 1863, when he was raised to the peerage as Baron Houghton. He was at first a conservative, but soon went over to the liberals. He has been conspicuous, and in a large measure successful, as an advocate of religious equality, popular education, and especially of prison reform, and has shown a deep interest in the cause of liberty in other lands than his own. In early life he made extensive tours in Southern Europe and the East, and published several volumes of travel. His poems have appeared in small volumes, entitled "Historical Poems" (1838), "Poetry for the People" (1840), "Memorials of Many Scenes" (1843), "Palm-Leaves" (1844), etc. A collected edition was issued in 1874. He has also edited the letters and literary remains of Keats, with a memoir (1848), and the poems of David Gray (1865), and has published numerous political pamphlets.

THE LONG-AGO.

EYES which can but ill define
  Shapes that rise about and near,
Through the far horizon's line
  Stretch a vision free and clear;
Memories, feeble to retrace
  Yesterday's immediate flow,
Find a dear familiar face
  In each hour of Long-ago.

Follow yon majestic train
  Down the slopes of old renown;
Knightly forms without disdain,
  Sainted heads without a frown:
Emperors of thought and hand
  Congregate, a glorious show,
Met from every age and land
  In the plains of Long-ago.

As the heart of childhood brings
  Something of eternal joy
From its own unsounded springs,
  Such as life can scarce destroy;
So, remindful of the prime,
  Spirits wandering to and fro,
Rest upon the resting-time
  In the peace of Long-ago.

Youthful Hope's religious fire,
  When it burns no longer, leaves
Ashes of impure desire
  On the altars it bereaves;
But the light that fills the Past
  Sheds a still diviner glow,
Ever farther it is cast
  O'er the scenes of Long-ago.

Many a growth of pain and care,
  Cumbering all the present hour,
Yields, when once transplanted there,
  Healthy fruit or pleasant flower.
Thoughts that hardly flourish here,
  Feelings long have ceased to blow,
Breathe a native atmosphere
  In the world of Long-ago.

On that deep-retiring shore
  Frequent pearls of beauty lie,
Where the passion-waves of yore
  Fiercely beat and mounted high;
Sorrows—that are sorrows still—
  Lose the bitter taste of woe;
Nothing's altogether ill
  In the griefs of Long-ago.

Tombs where lonely love repines,
  Ghastly tenements of tears,
Wear the look of happy shrines
  Through the golden mist of years;
Death, to those who trust in good,
  Vindicates his hardest blow;
Oh! we would not, if we could,
  Wake the sleep of Long-ago.

Though the doom of swift decay
  Shocks the soul where life is strong,
Though for frailer hearts the day
  Lingers sad and overlong,—
Still the weight will find a leaven,
  Still the spoiler's hand is slow,
While the future has its heaven,
  And the past its Long-ago.

Digitized by Google

THE BEATING OF MY HEART.

I WANDERED by the brook-side,
I wandered by the mill;
I could not hear the brook flow—
The noisy wheel was still.
There was no burr of grasshopper,
No chirp of any bird,
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

I sat beneath the elm-tree:
I watched the long, long shade,
And, as it grew still longer,
I did not feel afraid;
For I listened for a footfall,
I listened for a word—
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

He came not—no, he came not—
The night came on alone—
The little stars sat one by one,
Each on his golden throne;
The evening wind passed by my cheek,
The leaves above were stirred—
But the beating of my own heart
Was all the sound I heard.

Fast, silent tears were flowing,
When something stood behind;
A hand was on my shoulder—
I knew its touch was kind;
It drew me nearer—nearer—
We did not speak one word,
For the beating of our own hearts
Was all the sound we heard.

WHEN LONG UPON THE SCALES OF FATE.

WHEN long upon the scales of fate
The issue of my passion hung,
And on your eyes I lay in wait,
And on your brow, and on your tongue,

High-frowning Nature pleased me most:
Strange pleasure was it to discern
Sharp rock and mountains peaked with frost,
Through gorges thick with fir and fern.

The flowerless walk, the vapory shrouds,
Could comfort me; though, best of all,
I loved the daughter of the clouds,
The wild capricious waterfall.

But now that you and I repose
On one affection's certain store,
Serener charms take place of those,
Plenty and peace, and little more:

The hill that lends its mother-breast
To patient flocks and gentle kine;
The vale that spreads its royal vest
Of golden corn and purple vine;

The streams that bubble out their mirth
In humble nooks, or calmly flow,
The crystal life-blood of our earth,
Are now the dearest sights I know.

YOUTH, THAT PURSUEST.

YOUTH, that pursuest, with such eager pace,
Thy even way,
Thou pantest on to win a mournful race;
Then stay! oh, stay!

Pause and luxuriate on thy sunny plain;
Loiter—enjoy;
Once past, thou never wilt come back again,
A second boy.

The hills of manhood wear a noble face
When seen from far;
The mist of light from which they take their grace,
Hides what they are.

The dark and weary path those cliffs between
Thou canst not know;
And how it leads to regions never green,
Dead fields of snow.

Pause while thou may'st, nor deem that fate thy gain,
Which, all too fast,
Will drive thee forth from this delicious plain,
A man at last.

LONDON CHURCHES.

I STOOD, one Sunday morning,
Before a large church-door,
The congregation gathered
And carriages a score,—
From one out stepped a lady
I oft had seen before.

Her hand was on a prayer-book,
And held a vinaigrette;
The sign of man's redemption
Clear on the book was set—
But above the Cross there glistened
A golden Coronet.

For her the obsequious beadle
The inner door flung wide,
Lightly, as up a ballroom,
Her footsteps seemed to glide—
There might be good thoughts in her
For all her evil pride.

But after her a woman
Peeped wistfully within,
On whose wan face was graven
Life's hardest discipline—
The trace of the sad trinity
Of weakness, pain, and, sin.

The few free-seats were crowded
Where she could rest and pray;
With her worn garb contrasted
Each side in fair array—
"God's house holds no poor sinners,"
She sighed, and crept away.

Digitized by Google

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1810 at Somersby, Lincolnshire, where his father, Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, was rector of the parish. Alfred and his brothers Charles and Frederick were educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and all of them wrote poetry there. In 1828 Frederick received the prize for a Greek poem, and in 1829 Alfred gained the chancellor's medal for a poem on "Timbuctoo." About the same time Alfred and Charles printed privately "Poems by Two Brothers." Coleridge gave it as his opinion that those signed "C. T." indicated a coming poet, but those signed "A. T." had little promise! —which indeed may have been perfectly just, notwithstanding that time has reversed the judgment. Frederick published a collection of poems entitled "Days and Hours" in 1854; Charles took orders, became Vicar of Grasby in 1835, and assumed the family name of Turner on coming into an estate in Lincolnshire inherited from his father's mother. Alfred has devoted himself exclusively to poetry as a profession, and has never published a page of prose.

His first acknowledged volume was "Poems, chiefly Lyrical," published in 1830. The only really strong poems it contained were "Mariana" and "A Dirge." The others were mostly fanciful picturings of faint conceptions, poetical indeed, but almost colorless. In 1832 he published a revision of this volume, with very considerable additions, and some omissions. This should have established his reputation, for it contained "The Lady of Shalott," "Œnone," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "The May Queen," "The Lotos-Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," and "The Death of the Old Year." "The May Queen," perhaps the least meritorious of those here mentioned, became quickly and widely popular; but Tennyson did not really find himself famous until ten years later, when he published "English Idyls and other Poems" (1842). This volume contained "Morte d'Arthur," "St. Simeon Stylites," "The Talking Oak," "Ulysses," "Locksley Hall," "The Two Voices," "The Day Dream," "The Vision of Sin," and "Break, break, break." The dullest public that ever dawdlingly inquired for the newest novel, could not have stood before such an array of masterpieces as this. Byron and Shelley were dead; Wordsworth, Campbell, and Moore were in their dotage; the new poet had touches of them all, and a genius of his own besides. Since the publication of that volume, Tennyson has stood first among living poets, both in popular and in critical estimation.

In 1847 he published "The Princess: A Medley," which, sometimes sportive and sometimes serious, treats by way of romantic narrative the question of the equality of the sexes. Some of his finest songs appear as interludes in this poem; but the poem itself, though containing many good passages, is below the standard of his best work; even its versification is in many places inexcusably harsh or slipshod.

"In Memoriam" was published anonymously in 1850. It was suggested by, rather than relates to, the death of Arthur Henry Hallam (son of Hallam the historian), who was a college friend of Tennyson's and was to have married his sister. This poem, or rather series of poems, was sixteen years in process of composition, and by many is considered Tennyson's best.

In 1850, on the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate, which office he still holds. The salary is £127, and he receives in addition a government pension of £200.

"Maud, and other Poems," appeared in 1855, one of the other poems being the fine "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." In 1859 he published four "Idyls of the King," viz., "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere," founded on the legends of King Arthur, which rank among his highest efforts. He has since continued the series with five or six additional idyls, none of which are at all equal to the four just mentioned.

"Enoch Arden, and other Poems," was published in 1864. The principal poem in this volume was largely discussed and quoted, on account of the supposed peculiarity of its plot; but it has very little merit as a poem. Among the minor poems was "Sea Dreams," one of the poorest that Tennyson has ever written, for which he is said to have received £10 a line from the magazine ("Macmillan's," January, 1860) in which it first appeared. His latest publication is "Queen Mary, a Drama" (1875).

For many years Tennyson lived a quiet bachelor life in and about London. He married about the same time that he became Laureate, and went to live at Faringford, Isle of Wight, where he resided until 1869, when he removed to Petersfield, Hampshire. He secludes himself studiously from public gaze, and almost nothing is known as to his private life. The University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of D. C. L. in 1855, and at the same time the Fellows of his own college at Cambridge purchased his bust by Woolner and placed it in the vestibule of their library.

The editions of Tennyson's works are numerous and varied. A concordance to them, by D B. Brightwell, was published in London in 1869.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

TENNYSON.

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A Tennyson

Digitized by Google

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

MARIANA.

"Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to the ground.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

A DIRGE.

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Digitized by Google

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?
Let them rave.
Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee!
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Round thee blow, self-pleachèd deep,
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Through the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidery of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

Wild words wander here and there;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused:
But let them rave..
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana:
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight.
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle-wall,
Oriana:
She watched my crest among them all,
Oriana:
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stepped a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle-wall.
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana:
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana:
The damnèd arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
Oriana!
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepened in its place,
Oriana;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabbed me where I lay,
Oriana!
How could I rise and come away,
Oriana?
How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabbed me where I lay,
Oriana—
They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana!
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana!
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana:
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

Digitized by Google

O cursèd hand! O cursèd blow!
Oriana!
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana!
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot;
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed,
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, "'T is the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river-eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirrored magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle-bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

Digitized by Google

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote,
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot;
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
A corse between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house through all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn!"

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Through rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn;"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn!"

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmured she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seemed knee-deep in mountain-grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and without the steady glare

Digitized by Google

Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whispered, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone forevermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And leaned upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glittered on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres,
Heaven over heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not morn
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead dryly curled,
Seemed half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by-and-by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken through
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy played
Before I dreamed that pleasant dream—
Still hither, thither idly swayed
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I leaned to hear
The mill-dam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('T was April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool!

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leaped a trout. In lazy mood
I watched the little circles die;
They passed into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

Digitized by Google

For you remember, you had set,
  That morning, on the casement's edge
A long green box of mignonette,
  And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
  They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
  That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispelled the fear
  That I should die an early death:
For love possessed the atmosphere,
  And filled the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
  For I was altered, and began
To move about the house with joy,
  And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
  Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
  The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whitened floor,
  The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
  Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
  When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmered cold,
  I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
  And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
  Upon the freshly-flowered slope.

The deep brook groaned beneath the mill;
  And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits!"
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
  Gleamed to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!
  O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
  Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin:
  And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
  Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
  And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
  And all the casement darkened there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
  The lanes, you know, were white with May,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
  Flushed like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
  You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
  And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
  To yield consent to my desire:
She wished me happy, but she thought
  I might have looked a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
  "Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
  Her eyelids quivered as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
  But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
  Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
  I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
  I kissed away before they fell.

I watched the little flutterings,
  The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
  And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning looked upon your face,
  As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
  Approaching, pressed you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
  I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
  A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
  As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
  While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
  And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
  That trembles at her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I 'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
  About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
  In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I 'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
  And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
  With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasped at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
  True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
  For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
  You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
  And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
  Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
  Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing that other song I made,
  Half-angered with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut-shade
  I found the blue forget-me-not.

Digitized by Google

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
Look through my very soul with thine!
Untouched with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness passed again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

ŒNONE.

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's columned citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crowned snake! O Mountain-brooks,
I am the daughter of a river-god,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gathered shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain-lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain-pine;
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropped eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard-skin
Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a god's;
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-browed Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven

Digitized by Google

"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 't were due:
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarlèd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower through and through.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom,
Coming through heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,
Or labored mines undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and barèd limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

"'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
"'Yet indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiased by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a god's,
To push thee forward through a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'
"Here she ceased,
And Paris pondered, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtile smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,
Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laughed: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A. Solomon

Alfred T. Heath

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is
she?
Ah me, my mountain-shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips pressed
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark
morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep through them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling
stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my
mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost
hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblessed, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armèd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown;
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh, your sweet eyes, your low replies!
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed, I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall:
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fixed a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Digitized by Google

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'T is only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere:
You pine among your halls and towers:
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early mother dear;
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest, merriest day;
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

There 's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There 's Margaret and Mary, there 's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they say!
So I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley, whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday—
But I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be;
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?
There 's many a bolder lad 'll woo me any summer day,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you 'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;
For the shepherd-lads on every side 'll come from far away,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has woven its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the live-long day,
And I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'll be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'll merrily glance and play,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'll be of all the year the maddest, merriest day,
For I 'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I 'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking, call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

Digitized by Google

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year 's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom of the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me the Queen of May;
And we danced about the May-pole and in the hazel-copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There 's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'll come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early, early morning the summer sun 'll shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light,
You 'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn-shade,
And you 'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you 'll forgive me now;
You 'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I 'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Though you 'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I 'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door,
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
She 'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She 'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor;
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I 'm gone, to train the rose-bush that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you 're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet 's here.

Oh, sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seemed so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

Oh, blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!

Digitized by Google

Oh, blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
At housand times I blessed him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he showed me all the sin.
Now, though my lamp was lighted late, there 's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call:
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I prayed for both, and so I felt resigned,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listened in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It 's not for them: it 's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seemed to go right up to heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am passed away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There 's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

Oh, look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

Oh, sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the sun—
Forever and forever with those just souls and true—
And what is life that we should moan? why make we such ado?

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemèd always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon
Breathing like one who hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed: and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown
In the red west: through mountain-clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;

Digitized by Google

A land where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed, melancholy lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island-home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

I.

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentler on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leafed flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waving over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted over the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life: ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height:
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island-princes overbold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The gods are hard to reconcile:
'T is hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars,
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

Digitized by Google

VII.

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropped eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twinèd vine—
To watch the emerald-colored water falling
Through many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

VIII.

The lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Through every hollow cave and alley lone,
Round and round the spicy downs, the yellow lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 't is whispered, down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropped their shade,
"The Legend of Good Women," long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And for a while the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renownèd brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs;
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries;
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seemed to start, in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town;
And then, I know not how,

Digitized by Google

All those sharp fancies by down-lapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood; fresh-washed in coolest dew,
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brush-wood underneath
Their broad, curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red Morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root through lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful clime,
"Pass freely through: the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chiselled marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech: she, turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place:

"I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answered free; and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately statue draws.
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears:
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flickered as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore;
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
Touched; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then, when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
"I governed men by change, and so I swayed
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull, cold-blooded Cæsar. Prithee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck: we sat as god by god:
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburned Canopus. Oh, my life
In Egypt! Oh, the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

Digitized by Google

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailèd Bacchus leaped into my arms,
Contented there to die!

"And there he died: and when I heard my name
Sighed forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other; with a worm I balked his fame.
What else was left? look here!"

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspic's bite.)

"I died a queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name forever!—lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided through all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipped his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn:

"The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine:
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leaped forth: "Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She rendered answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers'—emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darkened glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me that equalled my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

She locked her lips: she left me where I stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and passed afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

Digitized by Google

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmured beside me: "Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon-eyes of angered Eleanor,
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: "Oh, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger through her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasped in her last trance
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her, who knew that love can vanquish death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blessed,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be expressed
By signs, or groans, or tears;

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he 'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns low:
'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we 'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone:
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There 's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

You ask me, why, though ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent:

Digitized by Google

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute:

Though power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Though every channel of the state
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonness about their lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of nightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In after-time, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond studs,
Myraids of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey, then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to after-time, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the after-time
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.
Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily:

Digitized by Google

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly plunged
Among the bull-rush beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking whistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.
But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear: "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were 'ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Digitized by Google

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light hath led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan—
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had winked and threatened darkness, flared and fell:
At which the parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now—that's nothing!" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smouldered log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seemed
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated, "Come again, and thrice as fair;"
And, farther inland, voices echoed, "Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHOUGH I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn, and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow:
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
Oh, take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heaped ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burden, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crushed
My spirit flat before thee.
O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And though my teeth, which now are dropped away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,
I drowned the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;

Digitized by Google

Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone.
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burned in fire, or boiled in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore; but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,
Betrayed my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvelled greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain-side.
My right leg chained into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Blacked with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be healed, and live:
And they say then that I worked miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy; cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouched on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew,
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
"Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffered long
For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone through,
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
That heaven, and earth, and time are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;
Or in the night; after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle: I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undressed goat-skin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
Oh, mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'T is their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here),
Have all in all endured as much, and more,
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are registered and calendared for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maimed; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise: for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maimed?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are healed. Ah, hark! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crowned a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim

Digitized by Google

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Showed like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils plucked my sleeve;
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarmed again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crushed my chest:
They flapped my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only through his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach:
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gathered to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling through me, and a cloud-like change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'T is gone: 't is here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fooled, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And, climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For, by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.
But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern; lead them to thy light.

THE TALKING OAK.

Once more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the mouldered Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak:

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burned,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself returned;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appealed
Than Papist unto saint.

For oft I talked with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answered with a voice.

Though what he whispered under heaven
None else could understand,
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'T were well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.

"O Walter, I have sheltered here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

"Old summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And numbered bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
And turned the cowls adrift:

"And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

Digitized by Google

"And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

"And I have shadowed many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

"And leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leaped and laughed
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrilled his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

"From when she gambolled on the greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain
(And hear me with thine ears),
That, though I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

"Oh, yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I looked at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

"An hour had passed—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheeled chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate.
Behind the dappled grays

"But, as for her, she stayed at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come
She looked with discontent.

"She left the novel half uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice through all the holt
Before her, and the park.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touched on, dipped and rose,
And turned to look at her.

"And here she came, and round me played,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole;'

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas! I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

"I wished myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have locked her hands.

"Yet seemed the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

Oh, muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

"Oh, yes, she wandered round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kissed the name she found,
And sweetly murmured thine.

"A tear-drop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

Digitized by Google

"Then flushed her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:
She kissed me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirred:

"And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discerned,
Like those blind motions of the spring,
That show the year is turned.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

"For ah! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have sucked and gathered into one
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss;
But, lightly issuing through,
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto."

Oh, flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

Oh, flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

"'T is little more: the day was warm:
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropped their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Through all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mixed with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife,
And lulled them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second fluttered round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadowed all her rest—
Dropped dews upon her golden head
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,
And plucked it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass—
Oh, kiss him once for me.

"Oh, kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further through the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice;
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

Oh, rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster-bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Digitized by Google

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage-morn may fall,
She, dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honored beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And hummed a surly hymn.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

Well, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wished for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis: then we crossed
Between the lakes, and clambered half way up
The counter-side; and that same song of his
He told me; for I bantered him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech, "Give,
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd!
To which, "They call me what they will," he said:
But I was born too late: the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of science waiting to be caught—
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crowned—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn:
"We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move:
The sun flies forward to his brother sun;
The dark earth follows wheeled in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.
"Ah, though the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
"When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Through all the season of the golden year.
"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
"Fly happy, happy sails and bear the press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing heavenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.
"But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circle of the golden year?"
Thus far he flowed, and ended; whereupon,
"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence answered James;
"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'T is like the second world to us that live:
'T were all as one to fix our hopes on heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."
With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it—James—you know him—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourished with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:
"What stuff is this!
Old writers pushed the happy season back—
The more fools they—we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip
His hand into the bag: but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."
He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits than an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vexed the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

Digitized by Google

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin
Forever and forever when I move. [fades
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on
Were all too little, and of one to me [life
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

THE EAGLE.

He clasps the crag with hookèd hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls.
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.
'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts, [racts.
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cata-

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest, [west.
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade, [silver braid.
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed; [that it closed:
When I clung to all the present for the promise

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast; [another crest;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turned—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs— [hazel eyes—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Digitized by Google

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As a husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursèd be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursèd be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursèd be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursèd be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perished: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love forevermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Digitized by Google

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

Oh, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

Oh, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffered"—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I have been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do;

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common-sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

So I triumphed, ere my passion sweeping through me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye:

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint;
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Digitized by Google

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a mouldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where Nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil starred;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breaths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats a European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing-space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild-goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun—

Oh, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunder bolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires: and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this:
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel

Digitized by Google

Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtaxed; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim earl, who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And prayed him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these?*"—"But I would die," said she.
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then filliped at the diamond in her ear;
"Oh, ay, ay, ay, you talk!"—"Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answered, "Ride you naked through the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.
Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim earl's gift; but ever at a breath,
She lingered, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipped in cloud; anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapped
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.
Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listened round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's foot-fall shot
Light horrors through her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flowered elder-thicket from the field
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peeped—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivelled into darkness in his head,
And dropped before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancelled a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, passed: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she gained
Her bower: whence reissuing, robed and crowned,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me:
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said:
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice would urge reply:
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings; like gauze they grew:
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said: "When first the world began,
Young Nature through five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied:
"Self-blinded are you by your pride;
Look up through night; the world is wide,

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
"Though thou wert scattered to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Digitized by Google

Then did my response clearer fall:
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answered scoffingly:
"Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

"Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancelled in the world of sense?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not know,"
But my full heart, that worked below,
Rained through my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
"Thou art so steeped in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said: "The years with change advance;
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Even yet." But he: "What drug can make
A withered palsy cease to shake?"

I wept: "Though I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

"And men, through novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Though watching from a ruined tower
How grows the day of human power?

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,
"Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

"Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dreamed not yet.

"Thou hast not gained a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resigned,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the withered leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garnered autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexèd spirit, sleep in trust:
The right ear, that is filled with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

"Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warmed me in the days
While still I yearned for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flashed and rung.

"I sung the joyful pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnished without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life.

"Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

"As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

"To search through all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law;

Digitized by Google

"At least not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

"In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honored, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soiled with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

"Yes!" said the voice, "thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

"Then comes the check, the change, the fall.
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, through enduring pain,
Linked month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely played,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Though scaling slow from grade to grade;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the farthest flights of hope,
Wrapped in dense cloud from base to cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with heaven:

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Even in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenchèd fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Through cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones:

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
"Not that the grounds of hope were fixed,
The elements were kindlier mixed."

I said: "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fixed and frozen to permanence:

"For I go, weak from suffering here;
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,
"His face, that two hours since hath died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain, or pride?

"Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

Digitized by Google

"His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing expressed
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek:
Though one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kissed, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim;
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapped in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

"I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touched by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crowned his head:
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they said,
'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

"Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a heavenly Friend,
And through thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half-shown, are broken and withdrawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced:

"Where wert thou when thy father played
In his free field and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

"A merry boy they called him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

"Who took a wife, who reared his race,
Whose wrinkles gathered on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days:

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping through from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

Digitized by Google

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

"Or if through lower lives I came—
Though all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is, or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

"Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laughed. "I talk," said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn:
"Behold it is the Sabbath-morn."

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like softened airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church-bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people pressed:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each entered like a welcome guest.

One walked between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Leaned on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walked demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blessed them, and they wandered on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver clear,
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
"I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seemed the whisper at my side:
"What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?" I cried.
"A hidden hope," the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wondered at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wondered, while I paced along:
The woods were filled so full with song,
There seemed no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

Digitized by Google

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O Lady Flora, let me speak:
  A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
  The dewy sister-eyelids lay.*
As by the lattice you reclined,
  I went through many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
  A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dreamed, until at last
  Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
  And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
  And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
  A crimson to the quaint macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
  Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
  And ordered words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
  Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
  Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curled,
  Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
  To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
  On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns,
  Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
  On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
  The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs;
  In these, in those the life is stayed.
The mantles from the golden pegs
  Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
  More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
  That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV.

Here sits the butler with a flask
  Between his knees, half-drained; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
  The maid-of-honor blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
  Her lips are severed as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
  The blush is fixed upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
  The beams that through the oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
  And beaker brimmed with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
  Grave faces gathered in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
  He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
  At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
  And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
  Close-matted, burr and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
  High up, the topmost palace-spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
  And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
  Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
  As all were ordered, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
  And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

Year after year unto her feet,
  She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
  The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her trancèd form
  Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
  And moves not on the rounded curl.

II.

The silk star-broidered coverlid
  Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever: and, amid
  Her full black ringlets downward rolled,
Glows forth each softly-shadowed arm
  With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
  Stillness with love, and day with light.

III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
  In palace-chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirred
  That lie upon her charmèd heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
  The gold-fringed pillow lightly pressed:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
  A perfect form in perfect rest.

Digitized by Google

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

All precious things, discovered late,
  To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
  And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
  His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy prince, with joyful eyes,
  And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
  That strove in other days to pass,
Are withered in the thorny close,
  Or scattered blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
  "They perished in their daring deeds."
This proverb flashes through his head,
  "The many fail: the one succeeds."

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
  He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The color flies into his cheeks:
  He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
  About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
  And whispered voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind;
  The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
  The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
  He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
  How dark those hidden eyes must be!"

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapped.
  There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapped,
  And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
  A breeze through all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
  And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
  The butler drank, the steward scrawled,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
  The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,
The maid and page renewed their strife,
  The palace banged, and buzzed, and clacked,
And all the long-pent stream of life
  Dashed downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
  And in his chair himself upreared,
And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke:
  "By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords,
  My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
  'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still
  My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
  I mentioned half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
  In courteous words returned reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
  And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
  And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
  In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
  Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
  The happy princess followed him.

II.

"I 'd sleep another hundred years,
  O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake forever, love," she hears,
  "O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
  And many a merry wind was borne,
And, streamed through many a golden bar,
  The twilight melted into morn.

III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
  "O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
  "O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
  Of vapor buoyed the crescent-bark,
And, rapt through many a rosy change,
  The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

"A hundred summers! can it be?
  And whither goest thou, tell me where?"
"Oh, seek my father's court with me,
  For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
  Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
  Through all the world she followed him.

Digitized by Google

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
  And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
  What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
  The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
  Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
  In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
  A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
  In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 't were to cramp its use, if I
  Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.

You shake your head. A random string
  Your finer female sense offends.
Well—were it not a pleasant thing
  To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
  To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise
  And learn the world, and sleep again;
To sleep through terms of mighty wars,
  And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
  As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will show,
  The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
  The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
  In divers seasons, divers climes;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
  And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
  Through sunny decades new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
  The flower and quintessence of change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
  So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
  That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right or am I wrong,
  To choose your own you did not care;
You 'd have *my* moral from the song,
  And I will take my pleasure there:
And, am I right or am I wrong,
  My fancy, ranging through and through,
To search a meaning for the song,
  Perforce will still revert to you;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
  All-graceful head, so richly curled,
And evermore a costly kiss
  The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
  Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
  In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have wakened hopes?
  What lips, like thine, so sweetly joined?
Where on the double rosebud droops
  The fulness of the pensive mind;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
  Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
  That lets thee neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
  And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasped the moral of thy life,
  And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
  And, if you find a meaning there,
Oh, whisper to your glass, and say,
  "What wonder, if he thinks me fair?"
What wonder I was all unwise,
  To shape the song for your delight,
Like long-tailed birds-of-paradise,
  That float through heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
  By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
  And either sacred unto you.

ST. AGNES.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
  Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
  May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
  Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
  That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
  As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snow-drop of the year
  That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
  To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
  To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
  My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
  To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
  Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
  In raiment white and clean.

Digitized by Google

He lifts me to the golden doors;
  The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
  And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
  To make me pure of sin.
The sabbath of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
  The Bridegroom with his bride!

EDWARD GRAY.

Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town
  Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?" she said;
  "And are you married yet, Edward Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
  Bitterly weeping I turned away:
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
  Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
  Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
  By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
  Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Filled I was with folly and spite,
  When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
  Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
  'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass—
  Whispered, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
  Speak a little, Elen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
  On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
  And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
  And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree
But I will love no more, no more,
  Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
  Bitterly weeping I turned away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
  And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

TO ——,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
  If such be worth the winning now,
  And gained a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
  A life that moves to gracious ends
  Through troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have missed the irreverent doom
  Of those that wear the Poet's crown:
  Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die
  Nor leave his music as of old,
  But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not show:
  Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
  Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
  A song that pleased us from its worth;
  No public life was his on earth,
No blazoned statesman he nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
  His worst he kept, his best he gave.
  My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
  The little life of bank and brier,
  The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
  And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
  For whom the carrion-vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,
  "If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watched thee daily,
  And I think thou lov'st me well."
She replies, in accents fainter,
  "There is none I love like thee."
He is but a landscape-painter,
  And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
  Presses his without reproof:
Leads her to the village altar,
  And they leave her father's roof.
"I can make no marriage present;
  Little can I give my wife.

Digitized by Google

Love will make our cottage pleasant,
  And I love thee more than life."
They by parks and lodges going
  See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,
  Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
  Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
  Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
So she goes by him attended,
  Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
  Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
  Parks and ordered gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
  Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer:
  Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
  Where they twain will spend their days.
Oh, but she will love him truly!
  He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
  When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
  Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
  And beneath the gate she turns;
Sees a mansion more majestic
  Than all those she saw before:
Many a gallant gay domestic
  Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
  When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
  Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
  Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
  "All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
  Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the country
  Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the color flushes
  Her sweet face from brow to chin:
As it were with shame she blushes,
  And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
  Pale again as death did prove;
But he clasped her like a lover,
  And he cheered her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
  Though at times her spirits sank:
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
  To all duties of her rank:
And a gentle consort made he,
  And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
  And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weighed upon her,
  And perplexed her, night and morn,
With the burden of an honor
  Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
  As she murmured, "Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
  Which did win my heart from me!"
So she drooped and drooped before him
  Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
  Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
  Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourned the Lord of Burleigh,
  Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
  And he looked at her and said,
"Bring the dress and put it on her,
  That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
  Bore to earth her body, dressed
In the dress that she was wed in,
  That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.
  In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gathered green
  From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheeled along,
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong:
  By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
  Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode through the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
  She seemed a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before:
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
  Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixed with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
  And fleeter now she skimmed the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
  With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast through sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her played,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She looked so lovely, as she swayed
  The rein with dainty finger-tips,

Digitized by Google

A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river:
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver:
And here by thee will hum the bee,
Forever and forever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I had a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Woven in circles: they that heard it sighed,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touched the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dashed together in blinding dew:
Till, killed with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Fluttered headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken,
And warned that madman ere it grew too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touched the palace-gate,
And linked again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-toothed man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a withered heath,
And lighted at a ruined inn, and said:

IV.

"Wrinkled hostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way:
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed.

"Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

"I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

"Wine is good for shrivelled lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

"Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

Digitized by Google

"Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruined trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"We are men of ruined blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

"Name and fame! to fly sublime
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied in the hands of fools.

"Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

"Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

"Oh! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"Drink, and let the parties rave:
They are filled with idle spleen;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

"He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

"No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs:
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect state:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance:
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

"You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modelled on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modelled, glazed, nor framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curled;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

Digitized by Google

"Fill the cup, and fill the can!
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

V.

The voice grew faint: there came a further change:
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range:
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.
Then some one spake: "Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said: "The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one: "He had not wholly quenched his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour."
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope?"
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS."

I.

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
Oh, we fell out I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
Oh, there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.

II.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III.

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Oh hark, Oh hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
Oh, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying,

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

V.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

"Oh, were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

Digitized by Google

"Oh, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

"Oh, tell her, brief is life, but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

VI.

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:

A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

VII.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stepped,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

VIII.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

IN MEMORIAM.

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day:
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me;
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

Digitized by Google

IN MEMORIAM.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let Darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapped about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

Oh, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is woven across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I 'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

ONE writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race"—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor—while thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home:
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.

Digitized by Google

Oh, somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking, "This will please him best,"
She takes a ribbon or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turned, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drowned in passing through the ford,
Or killed in falling from his horse.

Oh what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long, unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more,—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she fostered up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Through prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, through early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,
And travelled men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: oh to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasped in mine
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Digitized by Google

Calm and still light on yon great plain
  That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
  And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
  These leaves that redden to the fall:
  And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
  And waves that sway themselves in rest,
  And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
  To bear through heaven a tale of woe,
  Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
  I leave this mortal ark behind,
  A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
  And reach the glow of southern skies,
  And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, "Comes he thus, my friend?
  Is this the end of all my care?"
  And circle moaning in the air:
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
  About the prow, and back return
  To where the body sits, and learn,
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
  A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
  And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss forever new,
  A void where heart on heart reposed;
  And, where warm hands have pressed and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
  An awful thought, a life removed,
  The human-hearted man I loved,
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
  I do not suffer in a dream;
  For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
  And glance about the approaching sails,
  As though they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burden that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
  That thou hadst touched the land to-day,
  And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
  Should see thy passengers in rank
  Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
  The man I held as half-divine;
  Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
  And how my life had drooped of late,
  And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possessed my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
  No hint of death in all his frame,
  But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
  And roar from yonder dropping day:
  The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
  The cattle huddled on the lea;
  And wildly dashed on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
  That all thy motions gently pass
  Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
  And but for fear it is not so,
  The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
  And onward drags a laboring breast,
  And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me?
  Can calm despair and wild unrest
  Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
  The touch of change in calm or storm;
  But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
  Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
  Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

Digitized by Google

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunned me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Through circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week the days go by;
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee:
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 't is something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'T is little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing through his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind:
"It will be hard," they say, "to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze:

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, "Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wrôth: "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Digitized by Google

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
  Ye never knew the sacred dust;
  I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
  For now her little ones have ranged;
  And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,
  Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
  Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheered the way,
  And crowned with all the season lent,
  From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walked began
  To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
  As we descended, following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
  And spread his mantle dark and cold,
  And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
  Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
  And think that somewhere in the waste
The shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
  Or breaking into song by fits,
  Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
  I wander, often falling lame,
  And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, "How changed from where it ran
  Through lands where not a leaf was dumb;
  But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

"When each by turns was guide to each,
  And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
  And thought leaped out to wed with thought
Ere thought could wed itself with speech;

"And all we met was fair and good,
  And all was good that Time could bring,
  And all the secret of the spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

"And many an old philosophy
  On Argive heights divinely sang,
  And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady."

XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight
  As pure and perfect as I say?
  The very source and fount of day
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
  This earth had been the paradise
  It never looked to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
  Makes former gladness loom so great?
  The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
  A glory from its being far;
  And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I KNOW that this was life—the track
  Whereon with equal feet we fared;
  And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
  As like as carrier-birds in air;
  I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
  When mighty Love would cleave in twain
  The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way;
  I with it; for I long to prove
  No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
  And goodness, and hath power to see
  Within the green the mouldered tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
  Or see (in Him is no before)
  In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find ere yet the morn
  Breaks hither over Indian seas,
  That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods
  The captive void of noble rage,
  The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
  His license in the field of time,
  Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Digitized by Google

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
  The heart that never plighted troth,
  But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
  I feel it, when I sorrow most;
  'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
  The moon is hid; the night is still;
  The Christmas-bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
  From far and near, on mead and moor,
  Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
  That now dilate, and now decrease,
  Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
  I almost wished no more to wake,
  And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
  For they controlled me when a boy;
  They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
  As daily vexes household peace,
  And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
  To enrich the threshold of the night
  With showered largess of delight,
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly-boughs
  Entwine the cold baptismal font,
  Make one wreath more for Use and Wont
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
  Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
  Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
  The holly round the Christmas hearth;
  A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
  We gambolled, making vain pretence
  Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
  We heard them sweep the winter land;
  And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
  We sung, though every eye was dim,
  A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
  Upon us: surely rest is meet:
  "They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
  Once more we sang: "They do not die
  Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
  With gathered power, yet the same,
  Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
  Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
  O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
  And home to Mary's house returned,
  Was this demanded, if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
  There lives no record of reply,
  Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
  The streets were filled with joyful sound,
  A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
  The rest remaineth unrevealed;
  He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
  Nor other thought her mind admits
  But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
  All other, when her ardent gaze
  Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
  Borne down by gladness so complete,
  She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Digitized by Google

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure:
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

MY own dim life should teach me this,
That life should live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say, "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive?"
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me! what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crushed the grape,
And basked and battened in the woods.

XXXVI.

THOUGH truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral-reef.

XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darkened brow:
"Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
"I am not worthy even to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

"I murmured, as I came along,
Of comfort clasped in truth revealed;
And loitered in the Master's field,
And darkened sanctities with song."

XXXVIII.

WITH weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

Digitized by Google

No joy the blowing season gives,
  The herald melodies of spring,
  But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
  Survive in spirits rendered free,
  Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Could we forget the widowed hour
  And look on spirits breathed away,
  As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
  To take her latest leave of home,
  And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
  And tears are on the mother's face,
  As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
  Becoming, as is meet and fit,
  A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
  A life that bears immortal fruit
  In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
  How often shall her old fireside
  Be cheered with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
  And bring her babe, and make her boast,
  Till even those that missed her most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
  Till growing winters lay me low;
  My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

XL.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
  Did ever rise from high to higher;
  As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
  And I have lost the links that bound
  Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
  That I could wing my will with might
  To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee:

For though my nature rarely yields
  To that vague fear implied in death;
  Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
  An inner trouble I behold,
  A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind
  The wonders that have come to thee,
  Through all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLI.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
  He still outstripped me in the race;
  It was but unity of place
That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may place retain us still,
  And he the much-beloved again,
  A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
  That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
  When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLII.

If sleep and death be truly one,
  And every spirit's folded bloom
  Through all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on:

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
  Bare of the body, might it last,
  And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
  So that still garden of the souls
  In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
  As when he loved me here in time,
  And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead?
  For here the man is more and more;
  But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
  And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
  Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
  (If Death so taste Lethean springs)
  May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

Digitized by Google

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
  Oh, turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
  My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
  What time his tender palm is pressed
  Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
  And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
  And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
  From whence clear memory may begin,
  As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
  Which else were fruitless of their due,
  Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV.

We ranging down this lower track,
  The path we came by, thorn and flower,
  Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
  In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
  But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past:

A lifelong tract of time revealed;
  The fruitful hours of still increase;
  Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
  A bounded field, nor stretching far;
  Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVI.

That each, who reems a separate whole,
  Should move his rounds, and fusing all
  The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet;
  Eternal form shall still divide
  The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
  Enjoying each the other's good:
  What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
  Before the spirits fade away,
  Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
  Were taken to be such as closed
  Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
  She takes, when harsher moods remit,
  What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
  But better serves a wholesome law,
  And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
  But rather loosens from the lip
  Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLVIII.

From art, from Nature, from the schools,
  Let random influences glance,
  Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
  The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
  The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
  But blame not thou the winds that make
  The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencilled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,
  Ay me! the sorrow deepens down,
  Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

XLIX.

Be near me when my light is low,
  When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
  And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
  Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
  And Time a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
  And men the flies of latter spring,
  That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
  To point the term of human strife,
  And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day

L.

Do we indeed desire the dead
  Should still be near us at our side?
  Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Digitized by Google

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LI.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide: thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

LII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild-oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the lords of hell.

LIII.

OH, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not any thing:
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LIV.

THE wish, that of the living whole
No life may fall beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LV.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
She cries: "A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin, shrieked against his creed—

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills:

Digitized by Google

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVI.

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined:
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever looked with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

LVII.

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered: "Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LVIII.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me,
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day:
But I 'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LIX.

He passed; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, "How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?"

LX.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransomed reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly charactered and slight,
How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
How blanched with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXI.

Though if an eye that 's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past:

And thou, as one that once declined
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXII.

Yet pity for a horse o'erdriven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

Digitized by Google

LXIII.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely-gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream.

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
"Does my old friend remember me?"

LXIV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tossed
With "Love 's too precious to be lost
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXV.

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crossed,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVI.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest,
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And, closing eaves of wearied eyes,
I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church, like a ghost,
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle-breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad, I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXVIII.

I dreamed there would be spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chattered trifles at the door:

I wandered from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs;
They called me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They called me fool, they called me child:
I found an angel of the night;
The voice was low, the look was bright;
He looked upon my crown and smiled:

Digitized by Google

He reached the glory of a hand,
  That seemed to touch it into leaf:
  The voice was not the voice of grief;
The words were hard to understand.

LXIX.

I CANNOT see the features right,
  When on the gloom I strive to paint
  The face I know: the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
  A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
  A hand that points, and pallèd shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
  And shoals of puckered faces drive;
  Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores:

Till all at once beyond the will
  I hear a wizard music roll,
  And through a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance
  And madness, thou hast forged at last
  A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went through summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
  Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
  Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talked
  Of men and minds, the dust of change,
  The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walked

Beside the river's wooded reach,
  The fortress, and the mountain-ridge,
  The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXI.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
  And howlest, issuing out at night,
  With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crowned estate began
  To pine in that reverse of doom,
  Which sickened every living bloom,
And blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
  With thy quick tears that make the rose
  Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windlass flame
  Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
  A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
  Day, marked as with some hideous crime
  When the dark hand struck down through time,
And cancelled Nature's best; but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burdened brows
  Through clouds that drench the morning star,
  And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
  Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
  Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
  So little done, such things to be,
  How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
  The head hath missed an earthly wreath;
  I curse not Nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
  Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds;
  What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

Oh, hollow wraith of dying fame,
  Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
  And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
  To those that watch it more and more,
  A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
  I see thee what thou art, and know
  Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
  And what I see I leave unsaid,
  Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXIV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpressed
  In verse that brings myself relief,
  And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guessed;

What practice howsoe'er expert
  In fitting aptest words to things,
  Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert!

I care not in these fading days
  To raise a cry that lasts not long,
  And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Digitized by Google

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXV.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpened to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten through
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers?

LXXVI.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possessed the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance, and song, and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixed with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXVIII.

"More than my brothers are to me"—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
Through all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learned,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXIX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropped the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burden of the weeks;
But turns his burden into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reached out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXX.

Could I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no farther range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

Digitized by Google

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXI.

I WAGE not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shattered stalks,
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,
O sweet New-Year, delaying long;
Thou dost expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, New-Year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIII.

WHEN I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood:

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange-flower,
Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As linked with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

LXXXIV.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrowed most,
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained;
And whether love for him have drained
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Through light reproaches, half expressed,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

Digitized by Google

And led him through the blissful climes,
  And showed him in the fountain fresh
  All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
  Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
  To wander on a darkened earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
  O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
  O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crownèd soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
  How much of act at human hands
  The sense of human will demands,
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
  I felt and feel, though left alone,
  His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine:

A life that all the Muses decked
  With gifts of grace, that might express
  All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
  To works of weakness, but I find
  An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
  That loved to handle spiritual strife,
  Diffused the shock through all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
  For other friends that once I met;
  Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
  To mourn for any overmuch;
  I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had mastered Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
  Eternal, separate from fears:
  The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this:

But summer on the steaming floods,
  And spring that swells the narrow brooks,
  And autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
  Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
  My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
  A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
  "Arise and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
  Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
  But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I: "Can clouds of nature stain
  The starry clearness of the free?
  How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall:
  "'T is hard for thee to fathom this;
  I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
  Or so methinks the dead would say;
  Or so shall grief with symbols play,
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
  That these things pass, and I shall prove
  A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
  I, clasping brother-hands, aver
  I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
  The promise of the golden hours?
  First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
  That beats within a lonely place,
  That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
  Quite in the love of what is gone,
  But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
  Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
  The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of spring.

LXXXV.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
  That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
  Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
  Through all the dewy-tasselled wood,
  And shadowing down the hornèd flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
  The full new life that feeds thy breath
  Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
  On leagues of odor streaming far,
  To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper, "Peace."

Digitized by Google

LXXXVI.

I PASSED beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown:
I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I passed
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I lingered; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

LXXXVII.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
Oh, tell me where the senses mix,
Oh, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXVIII.

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixed in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

Oh, joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking through the heat;

Oh, sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

Oh, bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discussed the books to love or hate,
Or touched the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream:

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For, "ground in yonder social mill,
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man."
We talked: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

Digitized by Google

LXXXIX.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XC.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplished years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after-form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCI.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, though it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And though the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,
They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land,
Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost.

Oh, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
Oh, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCIV.

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirred:
The brook alone far off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

Digitized by Google

But when those others, one by one,
  Withdrew themselves from me and night,
  And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
  Of that glad year that once had been,
  In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
  The silent-speaking words, and strange
  Was Love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
  On doubts that drive the coward back,
  And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
  The dead man touched me from the past,
  And all at once it seemed at last
His living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirled
  About empyreal heights of thought,
  And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
  The steps of Time, the shocks of Chance,
  The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
  In matter-moulded forms of speech,
  Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
  The knoll once more where, couched at ease,
  The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And, sucked from out the distant gloom,
  A breeze began to tremble o'er
  The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
  Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
  The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

"The dawn, the dawn!" and died away;
  And east and west, without a breath,
  Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCV.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
  Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
  Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
  In many a subtile question versed,
  Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
  At last he beat his music out.
  There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
  He would not make his judgment blind,
  He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
  And Power was with him in the night,
  Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
  As over Sinai's peaks of old,
  While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVI.

My love has talked with rocks and trees;
  He finds on misty mountain-ground
  His own vast shadow glory-crowned;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
  I looked on these, and thought of thee
  In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
  Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
  Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away;
  The days she never can forget
  Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
  He loves her yet, she will not weep,
  Though rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He threads the labyrinth of the mind,
  He reads the secret of the star,
  He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
  A withered violet is her bliss;
  She knows not what his greatness is;
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
  Of early faith and plighted vows;
  She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
  She darkly feels him great and wise,
  She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand: I love."

Digitized by Google

XCVII.

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother-town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCVIII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest through thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath,
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

Oh, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

XCIX.

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right through meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day:
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

C.

Unwatched, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down.
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon, or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CI.

We leave the well-belovèd place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

Digitized by Google

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after-hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me: distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills,
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
Forever: then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learned that I must go,
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore,
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watched them, waxed in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw,
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong:
"We served thee here," they said, "so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, "Enter likewise ye
And go with us:" they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steered her toward a crimson cloud
That land-like slept along the deep.

CIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new, unhallowed ground.

CIV.

This holly by the cottage-eave,
To-night, ungathered, shall it stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Through which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Digitized by Google

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CV.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly-dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVI.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;
Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, though with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I 'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CVIII.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the school-boy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on: if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CIX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

Digitized by Google

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
  The proud was half disarmed of pride,
  Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
  The flippant put himself to school
  And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
  And felt thy triumph was as mine;
  And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill
  But mine the love that will not tire,
  And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CX.

The churl in spirit, up or down
  Along the scale of ranks, through all,
  To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
  His want in forms for fashion's sake,
  Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
  To whom a thousand memories call,
  Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
  Each office of the social hour
  To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
  Or villain fancy fleeting by,
  Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
  The grand old name of gentleman,
  Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

CXI.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
  That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
  On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
  Of all my love, art reason why
  I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
  Sprang up forever at a touch,
  And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
  And tracts of calm from tempest made,
  And world-wide fluctuation swayed
In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXII.

'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;
  Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
  Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen
  In intellect, with force and skill
  To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
  A soul on highest mission sent,
  A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm.

Should licensed boldness gather force,
  Becoming, when the time has birth,
  A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
  With agonies, with energies,
  With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIII.

Who loves not Knowledge! Who shall rail
  Against her beauty? May she mix
  With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
  She sets her forward countenance
  And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,
  She cannot fight the fear of death.
  What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
  All barriers in her onward race
  For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
  If all be not in vain; and guide
  Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
  But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
  O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
  Who grewest not alone in power
  And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

Digitized by Google

CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
  Now bourgeons every maze of quick
  About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
  The distance takes a lovelier hue,
  And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
  The flocks are whiter down the vale,
  And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea:

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
  In yonder greening gleam, and fly
  The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
  Spring wakens too; and my regret
  Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
  That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
  And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
  The life re-orient out of dust,
  Cry through the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
  Upon me, while I muse alone;
  And that dear voice I once have known
Still speaks to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
  For days of happy commune dead;
  Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVI.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,
  To hold me from my proper place,
  A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after-bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
  Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
  And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundred-fold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
  And every span of shade that steals,
  And every kiss of toothèd wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,
  The giant laboring in his youth;
  Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
  Are breathers of an ampler day,
  Forever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
  And grew to seeming-random forms,
  The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
  The herald of a higher race,
  And of himself in higher place
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
  Or, crowned with attributes of woe
  Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
  And heated hot with burning fears,
  And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
  The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
  Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXVIII.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat
  So quickly, not as one that weeps
  I come once more; the city sleeps:
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
  Betwixt the black fronts long withdrawn
  A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
  And bright the friendship of thine eye:
  And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXIX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath:
  I think we are not wholly brain,
  Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
  Let science prove we are, and then
  What matters science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
  Hereafter, up from childhood shape
  His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun,
  And ready, thou, to die with him,
  Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

Digitized by Google

The team is loosened from the wain,
  The boat is drawn upon the shore:
  Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
  By thee the world's great work is heard
  Beginning, and the wakeful bird:
Behind thee comes the greater light;

The market boat is on the stream,
  And voices hail it from the brink;
  Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
  For what is one, the first, the last,
  Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXI.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
  While I rose up against my doom,
  And yearned to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
  The strong imagination roll
  A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law.

If thou wert with me, and the grave
  Divide us not, be with me now,
  And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
  And like an inconsiderate boy,
  As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death:

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
  And every dew-drop paints a bow,
  The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
  O earth, what changes thou hast seen!
  There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
  From form to form, and nothing stands;
  They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
  And dream my dream, and hold it true;
  For though my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIII.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
  Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
  He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
  Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
  Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep,
  I heard a voice, "Believe no more,"
  And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
  The freezing reason's colder part,
  And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
  But that blind clamor made me wise;
  Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
  What is, and no man understands;
  And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, moulding men.

CXXIV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
  Some bitter notes my harp would give,
  Yea, though there often seemed to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth:
  She did not look through dimmer eyes;
  Or Love but played with gracious lies
Because he felt so fixed in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
  He breathed the spirit of the song;
  And if the words were sweet and strong,
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
  To seek thee on the mytic deeps,
  And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXV.

Love is and was my lord and king,
  And in his presence I attend
  To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
  And will be, though as yet I keep
  Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
  Who moves about from place to place,
  And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVI.

And all is well, though faith and form
  Be sundered in the night of fear;
  Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Digitized by Google

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n though thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags:
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when we met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And thronèd races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild hours that fly with hope and fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXVIII.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal:
Oh loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Love deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXIX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But though I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee though I die.

CXXX.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long
Demand not thou a marriage lay
In that it is thy marriage-day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

Digitized by Google

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes,
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

Oh, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watched her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answered, and again
The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

Oh, happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

Oh, happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of Eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed, and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favored horses wait:
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire;

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain-head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Digitized by Google

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers "Death."

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flattened, and crushed, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had failed,
And ever he muttered and maddened, and ever wanned with despair,
And out he walked when the wind like a broken worldling wailed,
And the flying gold of the ruined woodlands drove through the air.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirred
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trailed, by a whispered fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

Villany somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropped off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovelled and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

And Sleep must lie down armed, for the villanous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poisoned poison behind his crimson lights.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shattered limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

Digitized by Google

Would there be sorrow for *me?* there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapped in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
Oh, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

There are workmen up at the Hall: they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionnaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I played with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all—

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in my books, and the devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sighed for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an under lip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek?
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drowned,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave,
Walked in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his alehouse bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

When have I bowed to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bowed;
I bowed to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flashed over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

Digitized by Google

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow speared by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

We are puppets, man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;
However, we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

A monstrous eft was of old the lord and master of earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man;
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirled into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, and Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-necked geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise,
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

A VOICE by the cedar-tree,
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of death, and of honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow-grass and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bowed
Caught and cuffed by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burned
On the blossomed gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touched my hand with a smile so sweet

Digitized by Google

She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not returned.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Through the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a colored flame;
Till at last, when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seemed
And her smile were all that I dreamed,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

What if though her eye seemed full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewelled mass of millinery,
That oiled and curled Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, though but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yester morn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feigned,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gained!

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at mid-day moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixed,
And a morbid eating lichen fixed
On a heart half-turned to stone.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

I have played with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seemed,
And her smile had all that I dreamed,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me:
"Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me:
"Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sighed,
"No surely, now it cannot be pride."

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun looked out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moorland,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flashed in the sun

Digitized by Google

Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
And back returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poisoned gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turned into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Though the state has done it and thrice as well:
This broad-brimmed hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is stuffed with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huxter put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong
To take a wanton, dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.
Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie!

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

Oh, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite, quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

Rids in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing through the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here,
In among the lilies.

I kissed her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
Oh, Maud were sure of heaven
If lowliness could save her.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touched the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charles is snarling;
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

Digitized by Google

XIII.

SCORNED, to be scorned by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!
I passed him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turned the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunned itself on his breast and his hands.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair?
I longed so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I passed he was humming an air,
Stopped, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet;
Though I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heaped the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

MAUD has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on the lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climbed at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is clasped by a passion-flower.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of a carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books,
And her brother lingers late
With a roistering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh heaven, down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

The fancy flattered my mind,
And again seemed overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swelled
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;
But I looked, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shuddered and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else?

XVI.

THIS lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
Oh this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: oh, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

What, if she be fastened to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?

Digitized by Google

Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her so well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships.
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it through the West,
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it through the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seemed her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
Oh, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, though thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honeyed rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limbed Eve from whom she came.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seemed far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-hardened hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl!

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
Oh, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long, lover's kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that passed in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false Death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart and ownest own farewell;
It is but for a little space I go
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climbed nearer out of lonely hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

Digitized by Google

XIX.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walked awake with Truth.
Oh, when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darkened watching a mother decline,
And that dead man at her heart and mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things),
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vexed with lawyers and harassed with debt:
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing,
A world of trouble within!

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over the dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Sealed her mine from her first sweet breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death,
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancelled, had been so sweet:
And none of us thought of a something beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild,
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touched on me
This brother had laughed her down,
And at last when each came home,
He had darkened into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had reddened her cheek,
When I bowed to her on the moor.

Yet Maud, although not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

Kind? but the death-bed desire
Spurned by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
Oh, then, what then shall I say?—
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him—
She did not wish to blame him—
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly:
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gypsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

Digitized by Google

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be
Among the roses to-night."

XXII.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirred
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, "There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day:
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clashed in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

XXIII.

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine"—
Why am I sitting here so stunned and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—

Digitized by Google

And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it, that has been done?
Oh, dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of hell and of hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate;
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heaped on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke:
Wrought for his house an unredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood,
And thundered up into heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seemed to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
"The fault was mine," he whispered, "fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone: and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

XXIV.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name,
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurled,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Through this dim water-world?

Slight, to be crushed with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwrecked man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, forever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been passed by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!

Digitized by Google

Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, powers of the deep,
And comfort her though I die.

XXV.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left forever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

XXVI.

Oh, that 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixed with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be!

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is rolled;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou death-like type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about,
'T is the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapped in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

Through the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Through all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering through the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say "Forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest?"

But the broad light flares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

XXVII.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,

Digitized by Google

With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And though we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one;.
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have killed their Christ.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress:
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess:
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder, a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whispered a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known:
Who told *him* we were there?

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie:
He has gathered the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head;
Not beautiful now, not even kind;
He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not of us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linked a dead man there to a spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

Oh me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

XXVIII.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Through cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed, for it fell at time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seemed to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars
As he glowed like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

Digitized by Google

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have looked, though but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lightened my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionnaire:
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
"It is time, it is time! O passionate heart," said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
"It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
And I stood on a giant deck and mixed my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unrolled!
Though many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crushed in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
For the peace, that I deemed no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind:
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

I.

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits a universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great world-victor's victor will be seen no more.

Digitized by Google

V.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be tolled.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest forever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be tolled:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with his blazoned deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be tolled:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knolled;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem rolled
Through the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom;
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attempered frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an honored guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
Oh, give him welcome, this is he,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gained a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clashed with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labored rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Past the Pyrenean pines,
Followed up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheeled on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dashed on every rocky square
Their surging charges foamed themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flashed a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O savior of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And through the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Though all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust,
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall

Digitized by Google

Forever; and whatever tempests lower
Forever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Through either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Followed by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor showered all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Through the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands and through all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seemed so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
But speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

WILL.

Oh, well for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong;
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compassed round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crowned.
But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows through acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary, sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

Digitized by Google

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
"Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
  Some one had blundered:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
  Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
  Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
  All the world wondered;
Plunged in the battery-smoke,
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre-stroke
  Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not—
  Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
  Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
  Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
Oh, the wild charge they made!
  All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

IDYLS OF THE KING.

"Flos Regum Arthurus."
JOSEPH OF EXETER.

DEDICATION.

These to His Memory—since he held them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself—I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
These Idyls.
  And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my own ideal knight,
"Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to her—"
Her—over all whose realms to their last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,
The shadow of His loss moved like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him: he is gone:
We know him now: all narrow jealousies
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that:
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of winged ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but through all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,
And blackens every blot: for where is he,
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstained, than his?
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons
Hope more for these than some inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor—
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, through all times, Albert the Good!

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside Thee, that ye made
One light together, but has passed and left
The Crown of lonely splendor.
  May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee.
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

Digitized by Google

ENID.

The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great order of the Table Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her, as he loved the light of heaven.
And as the light of heaven varies, now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night
With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint
To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,
Who first had found and loved her in a state
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen herself,
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,
Loved her, and often with her own white hands
Arrayed and decked her, as the loveliest,
Next after her own self, in all the court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best
And loveliest of all women upon earth.
And seeing them so tender and so close,
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.
But when a rumor rose about the Queen,
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
Though yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,
Not less Geraint beleived it; and there fell
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,
Through that great tenderness to Guinevere,
Had suffered, or should suffer any taint
In nature: wherefore going to the king,
He made this pretext, that his princedom lay
Close on the borders of a territory,
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law;
And therefore, till the king himself should please
To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,
He craved a fair permission to depart,
And there defend his marches; and the king
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores
Of Severn, and they passed to their own land;
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,
He compassed her with sweet observances
And worship, never leaving her, and grew
Forgetful of his promise to the king,
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
Forgetful of his glory and his name,
Forgetful of his princedom and its cares.
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.
And by and by the people, when they met
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.
And this she gathered from the people's eyes:
This too the women who attired her head,
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,
Told Enid, and they saddened her the more;
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,
But could not out of bashful delicacy;
While he that watched her sadden, was the more
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn
(They sleeping each by other) the new sun
Beat through the blindless casement of the room,
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams;
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,
Admiring him, and thought within herself,
Was ever man so grandly made as he?
Then, like a shadow, passed the people's talk
And accusation of uxoriousness
Across her mind, and bowing over him,
Low to her own heart piteously she said:

"O noble breast and all-puissant arms,
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone?
I *am* the cause because I dare not speak
And tell him what I think and what they say.
And yet I hate that he should linger here;
I cannot love my lord and not his name.
Far liever had I gird his harness on him,
And ride with him to battle and stand by,
And watch his mightful hand striking great blows
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,
Not hearing any more his noble voice,
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,
And darkened from the high light in his eyes,
Than that my lord through me should suffer shame.
Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,
Or may be pierced to death before mine eyes,
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,
And how men slur him, saying all his force
Is melted into mere effeminacy?
O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,
And the strong passion in her made her weep
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,
And these awoke him, and by great mischance
He heard but fragments of her later words,
And that she feared she was not a true wife.
And then he thought, "In spite of all my care,
For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,
She is not faithful to me, and I see her,
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall."
Then though he loved and reverenced her too much
To dream she could be guilty of foul act,
Right through his manful breast darted the pang
That makes a man, in the sweet face of her
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.
At this he hurled his huge limbs out of bed,
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,
"My charger and her palfrey," then to her,
"I will ride forth into the wilderness:

Digitized by Google

For though it seems my spurs are yet to win,
I have not fallen so low as some would wish.
And you, put on your worst and meanest dress
And ride with me." And Enid asked, amazed,
"If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault."
But he, "I charge you, ask not, but obey."
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,
A faded mantle and a faded veil,
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
Wherein she kept them folded reverently
With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,
She took them, and arrayed herself therein,
Remembering when first he came on her
Dressed in that dress, and how he loved her in it,
And all her foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey to her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,
First seen that day: these things he told the king.
Then the good King gave order to let blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.
And when the Queen petitioned for his leave
To see the hunt, allowed it easily.
So with the morning all the court were gone.
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gained the wood;
There, on a little knoll beside it, stayed
Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard instead
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,
Came quickly flashing through the shallow ford
Behind them, and so galloped up the knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest gold,
Swayed round about him, as he galloped up
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bowed the tributary Prince, and she,
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace
Of womanhood and queenhood, answered him:
"Late, late, Sir Prince," she said, "later than we!"
"Yea, noble Queen," he answered, "and so late
That I but come like you to see the hunt,
Not join it." "Therefore wait with me," she said;
"For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds:
Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listened for the distant hunt,
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lagged latest, and the knight
Had visor up, and showed a youthful face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face
In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;
Who, being vicious, old, and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,
Made answer sharply that she should not know.
"Then will I ask it of himself," she said.
"Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;
"Thou art not worthy even to speak of him;"
And when she put her horse toward the knight,
Struck at her with his whip, and she returned
Indignant to the Queen; at which Geraint
Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"
Made sharply to the dwarf, and asked it of him,
Who answered as before; and when the Prince
Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.
The Prince's blood spurted upon the scarf,
Dyeing it: and his quick instinctive hand
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:
But he, from his exceeding manfulness
And pure nobility of temperament,
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrained
From even a word, and so returning said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:
And I will track this vermin to their earths:
For though I ride unarmed, I do not doubt
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being found,
Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,
And on the third day will again be here,
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answered the stately Queen.
"Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;
And may you light on all things that you love,
And live to wed with her whom first you love:
But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,
And I, were she the daughter of a king,
Yea, though she were a beggar from the hedge,
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard
The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,
A little vexed at losing of the hunt,
A little at the vile occasion, rode,
By ups and downs, through many a grassy glade
And valley, with fixed eye following the three
At last they issued from the world of wood,
And climbed upon a fair and even ridge,
And showed themselves against the sky, and sank.
And thither came Geraint, and underneath
Beheld the long street of a little town
In a long valley, on one side of which,
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose;
And on one side a castle in decay,
Beyond a bridge that spanned a dry ravine:
And out of town and valley came a noise
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,
And entered, and were lost behind its walls.

Digitized by Google

"So," thought Geraint, "I have tracked him to his earth."
And down the long street riding wearily,
Found every hostel full, and everywhere
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss
And bustling whistle of the youth who scoured
His master's armor; and of such a one
He asked, "What means the tumult in the town?"
Who told him, scouring still, "The sparrow-hawk!"
Then riding close behind an ancient churl,
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,
Asked yet once more what meant the hubbub here?
Who answered gruffly, "Ugh! the sparrow-hawk."
Then riding further past an armorer's,
Who, with back turned, and bowed above his work,
Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,
He put the selfsame query, but the man
Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:
"Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk
Has little time for idle questioners."
Whereat Geraint flashed into sudden spleen:
"A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!
Tits, wrens, and all winged nothings peck him dead!
Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
The murmur of the world! What is it to me?
O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!
Speak, if you be not like the rest, hawk-mad,
Where can I get me harborage for the night?
And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!"
At this the armorer turning all amazed
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,
Came forward with the helmet yet in hand
And answered, "Pardon me, O stranger knight;
We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,
And there is scantly time for half the work.
Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here,
Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,
It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge
Yonder." He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,
Across the bridge that spanned the dry ravine.
There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,
(His dress a suit of frayed magnificence,
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:
"Whither, fair son?" to whom Geraint replied,
"O friend, I seek a harborage for the night."
Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and partake
The slender entertainment of a house
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-doored."
"Thanks, venerable friend," replied Geraint;
"So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks
For supper, I will enter, I will eat
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast."
Then sighed and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,
And answered: "Graver cause than yours is mine
To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk:
But in, go in; for, save yourself desire it,
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
His charger trampling many a prickly star
Of spouted thistle on the broken stones.
He looked and saw that all was ruinous.
Here stood a shattered archway plumed with fern;
And here had fallen a great part of a tower,
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;
And high above a piece of turret-stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems
Clasped the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,
And sucked the joining of the stones, and looked
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang
Clear through the open casement of the hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is
That sings so delicately clear, and make
Conjecture of the plumage and the form:
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint:
And made him like a man abroad at morn
When first the liquid note beloved of men
Comes flying over many a windy wave
To Britain, and in April suddenly
Breaks from a coppice gemmed with green and red,
And he suspends his converse with a friend,
Or it may be the labor of his hands,
To think or say, "There is the nightingale;"
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,
"Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud;
Turn thy wild wheel through sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song you may learn the nest,"
Said Yniol; "enter quickly." Entering then,
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,
The dusky-raftered many-cobwebbed Hall,
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade;
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,

Digitized by Google

Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,
"Here by God's rood is the one maid for me."
But none spake word except the hoary Earl:
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court;
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine;
And we will make us merry as we may.
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

He spake: the Prince, as Enid passed him, fain
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught
His purple scarf, and held, and said, "Forbear!
Rest! the good house, though ruined, O my son,
Endures not that her guest should serve himself."
And reverencing the custom of the house
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;
And after went her way across the bridge,
And reached the town, and while the Prince and Earl
Yet spoke together, came again with one,
A youth, that following with a costrel bore
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them cheer,
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.
And then, because their hall must also serve
For kitchen, boiled the flesh, and spread the board,
And stood behind, and waited on the three.
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,
Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,
That crossed the trencher as she laid it down:
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his veins,
Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall;
Then suddenly addressed the hoary Earl:

"Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy:
This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell me of him.
His name? but no, good faith, I will not have it;
For if he be the knight whom late I saw
Ride into that new fortress by your town,
White from the mason's hand, then have I sworn
From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint
Of Devon—for this morning when the Queen
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,
Struck at her with his whip, and she returned
Indignant to the Queen: and then I swore
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,
And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.
And all unarmed I rode, and thought to find
Arms in your town, where all the men are mad;
They take the rustic murmur of their bourg
For the great wave that echoes round the world;
They would not hear me speak: but if you know
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have sworn
That I will break his pride and learn his name,
Avenging this great insult done the Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol: "Art thou he indeed,
Geraint, a name far-sounded among men
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,
Felt you were somewhat, yea, and by your state
And presence, might have guessed you one of those
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;
For this dear child hath often heard me praise
Your feats of arms, and often when I paused
Hath asked again, and ever loved to hear;
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong:
Oh never yet had woman such a pair
Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,
A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,
Drunk even when he wooed; and he he dead
I know not, but he passed to the wild land.
The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,
My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name
Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent
Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;
And since the proud man often is the mean,
He sowed a slander in the common ear,
Affirming that his father left him gold,
And in my charge, which was not rendered to him;
Bribed with large promises the men who served
About my person, the more easily
Because my means were somewhat broken into
Through open doors and hospitality;
Raised my own town against me in the night
Before my Enid's birthday, sacked my house;
From mine own earldom foully ousted me;
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,
For truly there are those who love me yet;
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,
But that his pride too much despises me:
And I myself sometimes despise myself;
For I have let men be, and have their way;
And much too gentle, have not used my power:
Nor know I whether I be very base
Or very manful, whether very wise
Or very foolish; only this I know,
That whatsoever evil happen to me,
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,
But can endure it all most patiently."

"Well said, true heart," replied Geraint,
"but arms:
That if, as I suppose, your nephew fights
In next day's tourney I may break his pride."

And Yniol answered: "Arms, indeed, but old
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,
Are mine, and therefore at your asking, yours.
But in this tournament can no man tilt,
Except the lady he loves best be there.
Two forks are fixed into the meadow-ground,
And over these is laid a silver wand,
And over that is placed the sparrow-hawk,
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.
And this, what knight soever be in field
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,
Who being apt at arms and big of bone

Digitized by Google

Has ever won it for the lady with him,
And toppling over all antagonism
Has earned himself the name of sparrow-hawk.
But you, that have no lady, cannot fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,
Leaning a little toward him: "Your leave!
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,
For this dear child, because I never saw,
Though having seen all beauties of our time,
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.
And if I fall, her name will yet remain
Untarnished as before; but if I live,
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,
As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.
And looking round he saw not Enid there,
(Who hearing her own name had slipped away)
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly
And fondling all her hand in his he said:
"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,
And best by her that bore her understood.
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she
With frequent smile and nod departing found,
Half disarrayed as to her rest, the girl;
Whom first she kissed on either cheek, and then
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,
And told her all their converse in the hall,
Proving her heart: but never light and shade
Coursed one another more on open ground
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale
Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,
When weight is added only grain by grain,
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast;
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;
So moving without answer to her rest,
She found no rest, and ever failed to draw
The quiet night into her blood, but lay
Contemplating her own unworthiness;
And when the pale and bloodless east began
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms
Were on his princely person, but through these
Princelike his bearing shone; and errant knights
And ladies came, and by-and-by the town
Flowed in, and settling circled all the lists.
And there they fixed the forks into the ground,
And over these they placed a silver wand
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,
Spake to the lady with him and proclaimed,
"Advance and take as fairest of the fair,
For I these two years past have won it for thee,
The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,
"Forbear: there is a worthier," and the knight
With some surprise and thrice as much disdain
Turned and beheld the four, and all his face
Glowed like the heart of a great fire at Yule,
So burned he was with passion, crying out,
"Do battle for it then," no more; and thrice
They clashed together, and thrice they brake their spears.
Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lashed at each
So often and with such blows, that all the crowd
Wondered, and now and then from distant walls
There came a clapping as of phantom hands.
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still
The dew of their great labor, and the blood
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drained their force.
But either's force was matched till Yniol's cry,
"Remember that great insult done the Queen,"
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,
And cracked the helmet through, and bit the bone,
And felled him, and set foot upon his breast,
And said, "Thy name?" To whom the fallen man
Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of Nudd!
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.
My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."
"Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,
"These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.
First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,
Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,
And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die."
And Edyrn answered, "These things will I do,
For I have never yet been overthrown,
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,
And there the Queen forgave him easily.
And being young, he changed himself, and grew
To hate the sin that seemed so like his own
Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last
In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn
Made a low splendor in the world, and wings
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
With her fair head in the dim yellow light,
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,
Woke and bethought her of her promise given
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—
So bent he seemed on going the third day,
He would not leave her, till her promise given—
To ride with him this morning to the court,
And there be made known to the stately Queen,
And there be wedded with all ceremony.
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,
And thought it never yet had looked so mean.

Digitized by Google

For as a leaf in mid-November is
To what it was in mid-October, seemed
The dress that now she looked on to the dress
She looked on ere the coming of Geraint.
And still she looked, and still the terror grew
Of that strange, bright, and dreadful thing, a court
All staring at her in her faded silk:
And softly to her own sweet heart she said:

"This noble Prince who won our earldom back,
So splendid in his acts and his attire,
Sweet Heaven, how much I shall discredit him!
Would he could tarry with us here awhile!
But being so beholden to the Prince,
It were but little grace in any of us,
Bent as he seemed on going this third day,
To seek a second favor at his hands.
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,
Far liefer than so much discredit him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress
All branched and flowered with gold, a costly gift
Of her good mother, given her on the night
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,
That night of fire, when Edyrn sacked their house,
And scattered all they had to all the winds:
For while the mother showed it, and the two
Were turning and admiring it, the work
To both appeared so costly, rose a cry
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled
With little save the jewels they had on,
Which being sold and sold had bought them bread:
And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,
And placed them in this ruin; and she wished
The Prince had found her in her ancient home;
Then let her fancy flit across the past,
And roam the goodly places that she knew;
And last bethought her how she used to watch,
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;
And one was patched and blurred and lustreless
Among his burnished brethren of the pool;
And half asleep she made comparison
Of that and these to her own faded self
And the gay court, and fell asleep again;
And dreamed herself was such a faded form
Among her burnished sisters of the pool;
But this was in the garden of a king;
And though she lay dark in the pool, she knew
That all was bright; that all about were birds
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;
That all the turf was rich in plots that looked
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;
And lords and ladies of the high court went
In silver tissue talking things of state;
And children of the king in cloth of gold
Glanced at the doors or gambolled down the walks;
And while she thought, "They will not see me," came
A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,
And all the children in their cloth of gold
Ran to her, crying, "If we have fish at all
Let them be gold; and charge the gardeners now
To pick the faded creature from the pool,
And cast it on the mixen that it die."
And therewithal one came and seized on her,
And Enid started waking, with her heart
All overshadowed by the foolish dream,
And lo! it was her mother grasping her
To get her well awake; and in her hand
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly:

"See here, my child, how fresh the colors look,
How fast they hold, like colors of a shell
That keeps the wear and polish of the wave!
Why not? it never yet was worn, I trow:
Look on it, child, and tell me if you know it."

And Enid looked, but all confused at first,
Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream:
Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,
And answered, "Yea, I know it; your good gift,
So sadly lost on that unhappy night;
Your own good gift!"—"Yea, surely," said the dame,
"And gladly given again this happy morn.
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,
Went Yniol through the town, and everywhere
He found the sack and plunder of our house
All scattered through the houses of the town;
And gave command that all which once was ours,
Should now be ours again: and yester-eve,
While you were talking sweetly with your Prince,
Came one with this and laid it in my hand,
For love or fear, or seeking favor of us,
Because we have our earldom back again.
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?
For I myself unwillingly have worn
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,
And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,
And pastime both of hawk and hound and all
That appertains to noble maintenance.
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;
But since our fortune slipped from sun to shade,
And all through that young traitor, cruel need
Constrained us, but a better time has come;
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride:
For though you won the prize of fairest fair,
And though I heard him call you fairest fair,
Let never maiden think, however fair,
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.
And should some great court-lady say, the Prince
Hath picked a ragged-robin from the hedge,
And like a madman brought her to the court,
Then were you shamed, and, worse, might shame the Prince
To whom we are beholden; but I know,
When my dear child is set forth at her best,
That neither court nor country, though they sought
Through all the provinces like those of old
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match."

Digitized by Google

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath;
And Enid listened, brightening as she lay;
Then, as the white and glittering star of morn
Parts from a bank of snow, and by-and-by
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,
And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,
Helped by the mother's careful hand and eye,
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;
Who, after, turned her daughter round, and said,
She never yet had seen her half so fair;
And called her like that maiden in the tale,
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,
And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first
Invaded Britain, but we beat him back,
As this great prince invaded us, and we,
Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.
And I can scarcely ride with you to court,
For old am I, and rough the ways and wild;
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream
I see my princess as I see her now,
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the gay.

But while the women thus rejoiced, Geraint
Woke where he slept in the high hall, and called
For Enid, and when Yniol made report
Of that good mother making Enid gay
In such apparel as might well beseem
His princess, or indeed the stately queen,
He answered, "Earl, entreat her by my love,
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
That she ride with me in her faded silk."
Yniol with that hard message went; it fell,
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn:
For Enid, all abashed, she knew not why,
Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,
But silently, in all obedience,
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,
Laid from her limbs the costly-broidered gift,
And robed them in her ancient suit again,
And so descended. Never man rejoiced
More than Geraint to greet her thus attired;
And glancing all at once as keenly at her,
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,
But rested with her sweet face satisfied;
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said:

"O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved
At your new son, for my petition to her.
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,
In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet,
Made promise, that whatever bride I brought,
Herself would clothe her like the sun in heaven.
Therefore, when I reached this ruined hold,
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
I vowed that could I gain her, our kind Queen,
No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst
Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought perhaps,
That service done so graciously would bind
The two together; for I wish the two
To love each other: how should Enid find
A nobler friend? Another thought I had:
I came among you here so suddenly,
That though her gentle presence at the lists
Might well have served for proof that I was loved,
I doubted whether filial tenderness,
Of easy nature, did not let itself
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;
Or whether some false sense in her own self
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;
And such a sense might make her long for court
And all its dangerous glories: and I thought,
That could I someway prove such force in her
Linked with such love for me, that at a word
(No reason given her) she could cast aside
A splendor dear to women, new to her,
And therefore dearer; or if not so new,
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power
Of intermitted custom; then I felt
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,
Fixed on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,
A prophet certain of my prophecy,
That never shadow of mistrust can cross
Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts:
And for my strange petition I will make
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
When your fair child shall wear your costly gift
Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,
Who knows? another gift of the high God,
Which, maybe, shall have learned to lisp you thanks."

He spoke: the mother smiled, but half in tears,
Then brought a mantle down and wrapped her in it,
And clasped and kissed her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climbed
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea
Looked the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come;
And then descending met them at the gates,
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,
And did her honor as the Prince's bride.
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun;
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
Remembering how first he came on her,
Dressed in that dress, and how he loved her in it,
And all the foolish fears about the dress,
And all his journey toward her, as himself
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,
"Put on your worst and meanest dress," she found
And took it, and arrayed herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour

Digitized by Google

Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,
By taking true for false, or false for true;
Here, through the feeble twilight of this world
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach
That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth
That morning, when they both had got to horse,
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:
"Not at my side! I charge you ride before,
Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge you, on your duty as a wife,
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
No, not a word!" and Enid was aghast;
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,
When crying out, "Effeminate as I am,
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,
All shall be iron;" he loosed a mighty purse,
Hung at his belt, and hurled it toward the squire.
So the last sight that Enid had of home
Was all the marble threshold flashing strown
With gold and scattered coinage, and the squire
Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again,
"To the wilds!" and Enid leading down the tracks
Through which he bade her lead him on, they passed
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode:
Round was their pace at first, but slackened soon:
A stranger meeting them had surely thought,
They rode so slowly and they looked so pale,
That each had suffered some exceeding wrong.
For he was ever saying to himself,
"Oh, I that wasted time to tend upon her,
To compass her with sweet observances,
To dress her beautifully and keep her true—"
And there he broke the sentence in his heart
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
May break it, when his passion masters him.
And she was ever praying the sweet Heavens
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.
And ever in her mind she cast about
For that unnoticed failing in herself,
Which made him look so cloudy and so cold;
Till the great plover's human whistle amazed
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she feared
In every wavering brake an ambuscade.
Then thought again, "If there be such in me,
I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,
If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights
On horseback, wholly armed, behind a rock
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all:
And heard one crying to his fellow, "Look,
Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,
Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound;
Come, we will slay him and will have his horse
And armor, and his damsel shall be ours."

Then Enid pondered in her heart, and said:
"I will go back a little to my lord,
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,
Far liever by his dear hand had I die,
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame."

Then she went back some paces of return,
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said:
"My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast
That they would slay you, and possess your horse
And armor, and your damsel should be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer. "Did I wish
Your warning or your silence? one command
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
And thus you keep it! Well then, look—for now,
Whether you wish me victory or defeat,
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,
Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,
And down upon him bare the bandit three.
And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint
Drave the long spear a cubit through his breast
And out beyond: and then against his brace
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him
A lance that splintered like an icicle,
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunned the twain
Or slew them, and dismounting like a man
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,
Stripped from the three dead wolves of woman born
The three gay suits of armor which they wore,
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits
Of armor on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
Together, and said to her, "Drive them on
Before you;" and she drove them through the waste.

He followed nearer: ruth began to work
Against his anger in him, while he watched
The being he loved best in all the world,
With difficulty in mild obedience
Driving them on: he fain had spoken to her,
And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath
And smouldered wrong that burned him all within:
But evermore it seemed an easier thing
At once without remorse to strike her dead,
Than to cry, "Halt," and to her own bright face
Accuse her of the least immodesty:
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more
That she *could* speak whom his own ear had heard
Call herself false: and suffering thus he made
Minutes an age: but in scarce longer time
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
Before he turn to fall seaward again,
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly armed,

Digitized by Google

Whereof one seemed far larger than her lord,
And shook her pulses, crying, "Look, a prize!
Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,
And all in charge of whom? a girl: set on."
"Nay," said the second, "yonder comes a knight."
The third, "A craven! how he hangs his head!"
The giant answered merrily, "Yea, but one?
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon him."

And Enid pondered in her heart and said:
"I will abide the coming of my lord,
And I will tell him all their villany.
My lord is weary with the fight before,
And they will fall upon him unawares.
I needs must disobey him for his good;
How should I dare obey him to his harm?
Needs must I speak, and though he kill me for it,
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said to him
With timid firmness, "Have I leave to speak?"
He said, "You take it, speaking," and she spoke.

"There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,
And each of them is wholly armed, and one
Is larger-limbed than you are, and they say
That they will fall upon you while you pass."

To which he flung a wrathful answer back:
"And if there were an hundred in the wood,
And every man were larger-limbed than I,
And all at once should sally out upon me,
I swear it would not ruffle me so much
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,
And if I fall, cleave to the better man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,
Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.
And he, she dreaded most, bare down upon him.
Aimed at the helm, his lance erred; but Geraint's,
A little in the late encounter strained,
Struck through the bulky bandit's corselet home,
And then break short, and down his enemy rolled
And there lay still; as he that tells the tale,
Saw once a great piece of a promontory,
That had a sapling growing on it, slip
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,
And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew:
So lay the man transfixed. His craven pair
Of comrades, making slowlier at the Prince,
When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood;
On whom the victor, to confound them more,
Spurred with his terrible war-cry; for as one,
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
All through the crash of the near cataract hears
The drumming thunder of the huger fall
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
And foemen scared, like that false pair, who turned
Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, picked the lance
That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves
Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,
And bound them on their horses, each on each,
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
Together, and said to her, "Drive them on
Before you," and she drove them through the wood.

He followed nearer still: the pain she had
To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,
Together, served a little to disedge
The sharpness of that pain about her heart:
And they themselves, like creatures gently born
But into bad hands fallen, and now so long
By bandits groomed, pricked their light ears, and felt
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So through the green gloom of the wood they passed,
And issuing under open heavens beheld
A little town with towers, upon a rock,
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it:
And down a rocky pathway from the place
There came a fair-haired youth, that in his hand
Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:
Then, moving downward to the meadow-ground,
He, when the fair-haired youth came by him, said,
"Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint."
"Yea, willingly," replied the youth; "and you,
My lord, eat also, though the fare is coarse,
And only meet for mowers;" then set down
His basket, and dismounting on the sward
They let the horses graze, and ate themselves.
And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than desire
To close with her lord's pleasure; but Geraint
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty, was amazed;
And "Boy," said he, "I have eaten all, but take
A horse and arms for guerdon; choose the best."
He, reddening in extremity of delight,
"My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."
"You will be all the wealthier," cried the Prince.
"I take it as free gift, then," said the boy,
"Not guerdon; for myself can easily,
While your good damsel rests, return, and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our earl;
For these are his, and all the field is his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell him
How great a man you are: he loves to know
When men of mark are in his territory:
And he will have you to his palace here,
And serve you costlier than with mowers' fare."

Then said Geraint, "I wish no better fare:
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.
And into no earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of palaces!
And if he want me, let him come to me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the night,
And stalling for the horses, and return
With victual for these men, and let us know"

Digitized by Google

"Yea, my kind lord," said the glad youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought himself a knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappeared,
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the Prince had brought his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let them glance
At Enid, where she drooped: his own false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he sighed;
Then with another humorous ruth remarked
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watched the sun blaze on the turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.
But she, remembering her old ruined hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, plucked the grass
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy returned
And told them of a chamber, and they went;
Where, after saying to her, "If you will,
Call for the woman of the house," to which
She answered, "Thanks, my lord;" the two remained
Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute
As creatures voiceless through the fault of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the street,
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst
Their drowse; and either started while the door,
Pushed from without, drave backward to the wall,
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,
Entered, the wild lord of the place, Limours.
He moving up with pliant courtliness,
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and grasped hand,
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously,
According to his fashion, bade the host
Call in what men soever were his friends,
And feast with these in honor of their earl;
"And care not for the cost; the cost is mine."

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told
Free tales, and took the word and played upon it,
And made it of two colors; for his talk,
When wine and free companions kindled him,
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the Prince
To laughter and his comrades to applause.
Then, when the Prince was merry, asked Limours,
"Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak
To your good damsel there who sits apart
And seems so lonely?" "My free leave," he said:
"Get her to speak: she does not speak to me."
Then rose Limours and looking at his feet,
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,
Crossed and came near, lifted adoring eyes,
Bowed at her side and uttered whisperingly:

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
Enid my early and my only love,
Enid the loss of whom has turned me wild—
What chance is this? how is it I see you here?
You are in my power at last, are in my power.
Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,
But keep a touch of sweet civility
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.
I thought, but that your father came between
In former days you saw me favorably.
And if it were so do not keep it back:
Make me a little happier: let me know it:
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.
And Enid, you and he, I see it with joy—
You sit apart, you do not speak to him,
You come with no attendance, page or maid,
To serve you—does he love you as of old?
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know
Though men may bicker with the things they love,
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,
Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,
A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks
Your story, that this man loves you no more.
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance—right well I know it—palled—
For I know men: nor will you win him back,
For the man's love once gone never returns.
But here is one who loves you as of old;
With more exceeding passion than of old:
Good, speak the word: my followers ring him round:
He sits unarmed; I hold a finger up;
They understand: no; I do not mean blood:
Nor need you look so scared at what I say:
My malice is no deeper than a moat,
No stronger than a wall: there is the keep;
He shall not cross us more; speak but the word:
Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me
The one true lover which you ever had,
I will make use of all the power I have.
Oh, pardon me! the madness of that hour,
When first I parted from you, moves me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
Made his eye moist: but Enid feared his eyes,
Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast:
And answered with such craft as women use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance
That breaks upon them perilously, and said:

Digitized by Google

"Earl, if you love me as in former years,
And do not practise on me, come with morn,
And snatch me from him as by violence;
Leave me to-night: I am weary to the death."

Low at leave-taking, with his brandished plume
Brushing his instep, bowed the all-amorous Earl,
And the stout Prince bade him a loud good-night.
He moving homeward babbled to his men,
How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,
Debating his command of silence given,
And that she now perforce must violate it,
Held commune with herself, and while she held
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased
To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And near him breathing low and equally.
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heaped
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden need;
Then dozed awhile herself, but over-toiled
By that day's grief and travel, evermore
Seemed catching at a rootless thorn, and then
Went slipping down horrible precipices,
And strongly striking out her limbs awoke;
Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,
With all his rout of random followers,
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her;
Which was the red cock shouting to the light,
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,
And glimmered on his armor in the room.
And once again she rose to look at it,
But touched it unawares: jangling, the casque
Fell, and he started up and stared at her.
Then breaking his command of silence given,
She told him all that Earl Limours had said,
Except the passage that he loved her not;
Nor left untold the craft herself had used;
But ended with apology so sweet,
Low spoken, and of so few words, and seemed
So justified by that necessity,
That though he thought, "Was it for him she wept
In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful groan,
Saying, "Your sweet faces make good fellows fools
And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring
Charger and palfrey." So she glided out
Among the heavy breathings of the house,
And like a household spirit at the walls
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and returned;
Then tending her rough lord, though all unasked,
In silence, did him service as a squire:
Till issuing armed he found the host and cried,
"Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he learned it, "Take
Five horses and their armors;" and the host,
Suddenly honest, answered in amaze,
"My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!"
"You will be all the wealthier," said the Prince,
And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day
I charge you, Enid, more especially,
What thing soever you may hear, or see,
Or fancy (though I count it of small use
To charge you), that you speak not but obey."

And Enid answered: "Yea, my lord, I know
Your wish, and would obey; but riding first,
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,
I see the danger which you cannot see:
Then not to give you warning, that seems hard;
Almost beyond me: yet I would obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it: be not too wise;
Seeing that you are wedded to a man,
Not quite mismated with a yawning clown,
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,
With eyes to find you out however far,
And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turned and looked as keenly at her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
And that within her, which a wanton fool,
Or hasty judger would have called her guilt,
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.
And Geraint looked and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,
Led from the territory of false Limours
To the waste earldom of another earl,
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals called the Bull,
Went Enid with her sullen follower on.
Once she looked back, and when she saw him ride
More near by many a rood than yester-morn,
It well-nigh made her cheerful; till Geraint
Waving an angry hand as who should say
"You watch me," saddened all her heart again.
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,
And yet to give him warning, for he rode
As if he heard not, moving back she held
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
Because she kept the letter of his word
Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.
And in the moment after, wild Limours,
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud
Whose skirts are loosened by the breaking storm,
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
Dashed on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore
Down by the length of lance and arm beyond
The crupper, and so left him stunned or dead,
And overthrew the next that followed him,
And blindly rushed on all the rout behind.
But at the flash and motion of the man
They vanished panic-stricken, like a shoal
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
Adown the crystal dikes at Camelot
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,
But if a man who stands upon the brink
But lift a shining hand against the sun,
There is not left the twinkle of a fin
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;

Digitized by Google

So, scared but at the motion of the man,
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,
And left him lying in the public way;
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,
Who saw the chargers of the two that fell
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,
Mixed with the flyers. "Horse and man," he said,
"All of one mind and all right-honest friends!
Not a hoof left: and I methinks till now
Was honest—paid with horses and with arms;
I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:
And so what say you, shall we strip him there
Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough
To bear his armor? shall we fast, or dine?
No?—then do you, being right honest, pray
That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm,
I too would still be honest." Thus he said:
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,
And answering not one word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,
But coming back he learns it, and the loss
So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;
So fared it with Geraint, who being pricked
In combat with the follower of Limours,
Bled underneath his armor secretly,
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife
What ailed him, hardly knowing it himself,
Till his eye darkened and his helmet wagged;
And at a sudden swerving of the road,
Though happily down on a bank of grass,
The Prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms,
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,
And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,
And swathed the hurt that drained her dear lord's life.
Then after all was done that hand could do,
She rested and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many passed, but none regarded her,
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,
A woman weeping for her murdered mate
Was cared as much for as a summer shower:
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:
Another hurrying past, a man at arms,
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl:
Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,
He drove the dust against her veilless eyes:
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in his fear;
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,
And scoured into the coppices and was lost,
While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances up;
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,
Cried out with a big voice, "What, is he dead?"
"No, no, not dead!" she answered in all haste.
"Would some of your kind people take him up,
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun:
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead."

Then said Earl Doorm: "Well, if he be not dead,
Why wail you for him thus? you seem a child.
And be he dead, I count you for a fool;
Your wailing will not quicken him: dead or not,
You mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall:
An if he live, we will have him of our band;
And if he die, why earth has earth enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,
A noble one."
He spake, and passed away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone
Seems to be plucked at by the village boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growled,
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid;
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,
Such as they brought upon their forays out
For those that might be wounded; laid him on it
All in the hollow of his shield, and took
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,
(His gentle charger following him unled)
And cast him and the bier in which he lay
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
And then departed, hot in haste to join
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,
And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.
They might as well have blessed her: she was deaf
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,
There in the naked hall, propping his head,
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.
And at the last he wakened from his swoon,
And found his own dear bride propping his head,
And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him;
And felt the warm tears falling on his face;
And said to his own heart, "She weeps for me:"
And yet lay still, and feigned himself as dead,
That he might prove her to the uttermost,
And say to his own heart, "She weeps for me."

But in the falling afternoon returned
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.
His lusty spearmen followed him with noise:
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang

Digitized by Google

Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,
And doffed his helm: and then there fluttered in,
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,
A tribe of women, dressed in many hues,
And mingled with the spearmen: and Earl Doorm
Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,
And called for flesh and wine to feed his spears.
And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,
And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh:
And none spake word, but all sat down at once,
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,
Feeding like horses when you hear them feed;
Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,
He rolled his eyes about the hall, and found
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
Then he remembered her, and how she wept;
And out of her there came a power upon him:
And rising on the sudden he said: "Eat!
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.
God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.
Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,
For were I dead who is it would weep for me?
Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.
And so there lived some color in your cheek,
There is not one among my gentlewomen
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,
And I will do the thing I have not done,
For you shall share my earldom with me, girl,
And we will live like two birds in one nest,
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,
For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke: the brawny spearman let his cheek
Bulge with the unswallowed piece, and turning stared;
While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn
Down, as the worm draws in the withered leaf
And makes it earth, hissed each at other's ear
What shall not be recorded—women they,
Women, or what had been those gracious things,
But now desired the humbling of their best,
Yea, would have helped him to it: and all at once
They hated her, who took no thought of them,
But answered in low voice, her meek head yet
Drooping, "I pray you of your courtesy,
He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,
But like a mighty patron, satisfied
With what himself had done so graciously,
Assumed that she had thanked him, adding, "Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine."

She answered meekly, "How should I be glad
Henceforth in all the world at anything,
Until my lord arise and look upon me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on her,
And bare her by main violence to the board,
And thrust the dish before her, crying, "Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vexed, "I will not eat,
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me." "Drink, then," he answered. "Here!"
(And filled a horn with wine and held it to her),
"Lo! I, myself, when flushed with fight, or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often I myself,
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat:
Drink, therefore, and the wine will change your will."

"Not so," she cried, "by Heaven, I will not drink,
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turned all red and paced his hall,
Now gnawed his under, now his upper lip,
And coming up close to her, said at last:
"Girl, for I see you scorn my courtesies,
Take warning: yonder man is surely dead;
And I compel all creatures to my will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wail for one,
Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,
Beholding how you butt against my wish,
That I forbear you thus: cross me no more.
At least put off to please me this poor gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed;
I love that beauty should go beautifully:
For see you not my gentlewomen here,
How gay, how suited to the house of one,
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully!
Rise, therefore; robe yourself in this: obey."

He spoke, and one among his gentlewomen
Displayed a splendid silk of foreign loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue
Played into green, and thicker down the front
With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,
When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,
And with the dawn ascending lets the day
Strike where it clung: so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answered, harder to be moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,
And now their hour has come; and Enid said:

"In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,
And loved me serving in my father's hall:
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,
And there the Queen arrayed me like the sun;
In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,
When now he rode upon this fatal quest
Of honor, where no honor can be gained:
And this poor gown I will not cast aside
Until himself arise a living man,
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough:
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be:
I never loved, can never love but him:
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,
He being as he is, to let me be."

Digitized by Google

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,
And took his russet beard between his teeth;
Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood
Crying, "I count it of no more avail,
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;
Take my salute," unknightly with flat hand,
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.
Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
And since she thought, "he had not dared to do it,
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
Which sees the trapper coming through the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it
Shore through the swarthy neck, and like a ball
The russet-bearded head rolled on the floor.
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.
And all the men and women in the hall
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
Were left alone together, and he said:

"Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man;
Done you more wrong: we both have undergone
That trouble which has left me thrice your own:
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.
And here I lay this penance on myself,
Not, though mine own ears heard you yester-morn—
You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,
I heard you say, that you were no true wife:
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it:
I do believe yourself against yourself,
And will henceforward rather die than doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart:
She only prayed him, "Fly, they will return
And slay you; fly, your charger is without,
My palfrey lost." "Then, Enid, shall you ride
Behind me." "Yea," said Enid, "let us go."
And moving out they found the stately horse,
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,
Neighed with all gladness as they came, and stooped
With a low whinny toward the pair: and she
Kissed the white star upon his noble front,
Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
Mounted, and reached a hand, and on his foot
She set her own and climbed; he turned his face
And kissed her climbing, and she cast her arms
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind
Than lived through her, who in that perilous hour
Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,
And felt him hers again: she did not weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain:
Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes
As not to see before them on the path,
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,
She, with her mind all full of what had chanced,
Shrieked to the stranger, "Slay not a dead man!"
"The voice of Enid," said the knight; but she,
Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,
Was moved so much the more, and shrieked again,
"O cousin, slay not him who gave you life."
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake:
"My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm;
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,
Who love you, Prince, with something of the love
Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.
For once, when I was up so high in pride
That I was half-way down the slope to hell,
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,
And since I knew this Earl, when I myself
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
I come the mouthpiece of our king to Doorm
(The king is close behind me) bidding him
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,
Submit, and hear the judgment of the king."

"He hears the judgment of the King of Kings,"
Cried the wan Prince; "and lo the powers of Doorm
Are scattered," and he pointed to the field,
Where, huddled here and there on mound and knoll,
Were men and women staring and aghast,
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier told
How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.
But when the knight besought him, "Follow me,
Prince, to the camp, and in the king's own ear
Speak what has chanced; you surely have endured
Strange chances here alone;" that other flushed,
And hung his head, and halted in reply,
Fearing the mild face of the blameless king,
And after madness acted question asked;
Till Edyrn crying, "If you will not go
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"
"Enough," he said, "I follow," and they went.
But Enid in their going had two fears,
One from the bandit scattered in the field,
And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,
When Edyrn reined his charger at her side,
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
From which old fires have broken, men may fear
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:

"Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause
To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.
Yourself were first the blameless cause to make
My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood
Break into furious flame; being repulsed

Digitized by Google

By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought
Until I overturned him; then set up
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So waxed in pride, that I believed myself
Unconquerable, for I was well-nigh mad:
And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,
I should have slain your father, seized yourself.
I lived in hope that some time you would come
To these my lists with him whom best you loved;
And there poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes,
The truest eyes that ever answered heaven,
Behold me overturn and trample on him.
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or prayed to me,
I should not less have killed him. And you came—
But once you came—and with your own true eyes
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow
My proud self, and my purpose three years old,
And set his foot upon me, and give me life.
There was I broken down; there was I saved:
Though thence I rode all-shamed, hating the life
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid upon me
Was but to rest a while within her court;
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were known, I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former life,
And find that it had been the wolf's indeed:
And oft I talked with Dubric, the high saint,
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,
Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man.
And you were often there about the Queen,
But saw me not, or marked not if you saw;
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,
But kept myself aloof till I was changed;
And fear not, cousin; I am changed indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous
Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,
There most in those who most have done them ill.
And when they reached the camp the King himself
Advanced to greet them, and beholding her
Though pale, yet happy, asked her not a word,
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held
In converse for a little, and returned,
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,
And kissed her with all pureness, brother-like,
And showed an empty tent allotted her,
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her
Pass into it, turned to the Prince, and said:

"Prince, when of late you prayed me for my leave
To move to your own land, and there defend
Your marches, I was pricked with some reproof,
As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,
By having looked too much through alien eyes,
And wrought too long with delegated hands,
Not used mine own: but now behold me come
To cleanse this common sewer of all my realm,
With Edyrn and with others: have you looked
At Edyrn? have you seen how nobly changed?
This work of his is great and wonderful.
His very face with change of heart is changed.
The world will not believe a man repents:
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.
Full seldom *does* a man repent, or use
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart
As I will weed this land before I go.
I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,
Not rashly, but have proved him every way
One of our noblest, our most valorous,
Sanest and most obedient: and, indeed,
This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself
After a life of violence, seems to me
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful
Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,
My subject with my subjects under him,
Should make an onslaught single on a realm
Of robbers, though he slew them one by one,
And were himself nigh wounded to the death."

So spake the King; low bowed the Prince, and felt
His work was neither great nor wonderful,
And passed to Enid's tent; and thither came
The King's own leech to look into his hurt;
And Enid tended on him there; and there
Her constant motion round him, and the breath
Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,
Filled all the genial courses of his blood
With deeper and with ever deeper love,
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake
Fills all the sacred Dee. So passed the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes
On whom his father Uther left in charge
Long since, to guard the justice of the King:
He looked and found them wanting; and as now
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,
He rooted out the slothful officer
Or guilty, which for bribe had winked at wrong,
And in their chairs set up a stronger race
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere
Cleared the dark places and let in the law,
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then when Geraint was whole again, they passed
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,
And clothed her in apparel like the day.
And though Geraint could never take again
That comfort from their converse which he took

Digitized by Google

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,
He rested well content that all was well.
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores
Of Severn, and they passed to their own land.
And there he kept the justice of the King
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They called him the great Prince and man of men.
But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more
But rested in her fealty, till he crowned
A happy life with a fair death, and fell
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

ELAINE.

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure, fashioned for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazoned on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day
Leaving her household and good father climbed
That eastern tower, and entering barred her door,
Stripped off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guessed a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah God's mercy what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have killed, but God
Broke the strong lance, and rolled his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordained, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,
Long ere the people chose him for their king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain-side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together: but their names were lost.
And each had slain his brother at a blow,
And down they fell and made the glen abhorred:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleached,
And lichened into color with the crags:
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crowned skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Rolled into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Plucked from the crown, and showed them to his knights,
Saying "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the king's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke:
And eight years passed, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won: but meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "you know it."
"Then will you miss," he answered, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight you love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded, and a heart,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen

Digitized by Google

(However much he yearned to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame.
Why go you not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful king is gone!"
Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:
"Are you so wise? you were not once so wise,
My queen, that summer, when you loved me first.
Then of the crowd you took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allowed
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has linked our names together in his lay,
Lancelot the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the king
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh.
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless king,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tampered with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word,
As if it were his God's?"
"Yea," said the Queen
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true king
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself:
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself: not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that showed the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadowed track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarmed.
And Lancelot marvelled at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stepped the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not: some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approached them: then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His you can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it."
Here laughed the father, saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him: but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride
Joust for it, and win and bring it in an hour
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but played on Torre:
He seemed so sullen, vexed he could not go:
A jest, no more: for, knight, the maiden dreamed

Digitized by Google

That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipped and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But father give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answered Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;
And you shall win this diamond—as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond—if you may,
And yield it to this maiden, if you will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tossed about,
Flushed slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus returned:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she looked,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marred his face, and marked it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the slecker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marred as he was, he seemed the goodliest man,
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marred, of more than twice her years,
Seamed with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stepped with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertained.
And much they asked of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answered he:
But Lancelot when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learned and warned me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maimed;
But I, my sons and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"Oh there, great Lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
Oh tell us; for we live apart, you know,
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answered him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four wild battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thundered in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By castle Gurnion where the glorious king
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald, centred in a sun
Of silver rays, that lightened as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs,
Saying, his knights are better men than he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives
No greater leader."
While he uttered this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—
Being mirthful he but in a stately kind—
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to-and-fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely through all hinderance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,

Digitized by Google

Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Passed inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turned, and smoothed
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He looked, and more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dreamed she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, though he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.
Suddenly flashed on her a wild desire,
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
My favor at this tourney?"—"Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."
"Yea, so," she answered; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turned
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answered, "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him "a red sleeve
Broidered with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face, and filled her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet unblazoned shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come."—"A grace to me,"
She answered, "twice to-day. I am your squire."
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed;"
So kissed her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she stayed a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield
In silence, while she watched their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipped below the downs.
Then to her tower she climbed, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions passed away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had prayed, labored and prayed
And ever laboring had scooped himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows through the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abashed Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it, indeed?"
And after muttering "the great Lancelot"
At last he got his breath, and answered, "One,
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there—then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reached the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run through the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Through knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever through the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answered young Lavaine and said:
"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him

Digitized by Google

As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assailed, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurled into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory: King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone,
The grace and versatility of the man—
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized on them,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couched their spears and pricked their steeds and thus,
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wild North Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it, so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Pricked sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced through his side, and there snapped, and remained.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth.
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party—though it seemed half-miracle
To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the heralds blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried, "Advance, and take your prize
The diamond;" but he answered, "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I and I charge you, follow me not."
He spoke and vanished suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head;"
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw—
Draw"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swooned away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanched his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wide world's rumor by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight through whom we won the day
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the king, "that such a one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
He seemed to me another Lancelot—
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honor; since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us what he is and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest, until you find."

So saying from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,
And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the king's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Passed, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who has come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain

Digitized by Google

Of glory, and has added wound to wound,
And ridden away to die?" So feared the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, returned.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing asked,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquered; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decayed:
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.'"
Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.
Surely his king and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—
Ill news, my queen, for all who love him, these!
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."
"Yea, lord," she said,
"Your hopes are mine," and saying that she choked,
And sharply turned about to hide her face,
Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great king's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clenched her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shrieked out "traitor" to the unhearing wall,
Then flashed into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while through all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touched at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, though late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enamelled arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught her breath.
Through her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she swooned:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridden wildly round
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.
To whom the lord of Astolat, "Bide with us,
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stayed; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot perfect—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turned:
"Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebelled against it, saying to him, "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble king,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your king,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipped him at, and went
To all the winds?"—"Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes:
But an you will it let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crowned with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mocked:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answered, merrily, "I,
Who dreamed my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dreamed," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, you know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer: "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship,
And I, when often they have talked of love,
Wished it had been my mother, for they talked,
Meseemed, of what they knew not; so myself—
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
Methinks there is none other I can love."

Digitized by Google

"Yea, by God's death," said he, "you love him well,
But would not, knew you what all others know,
And whom he loves."—"So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace: he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
May it be so? why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand: and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So you will learn the courtesies of the court,
We too shall know each other."
Then he gave,
And slightly kissed the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leaped on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he passed; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But failed to find him though I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid,
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frowned, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! you shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Lingered that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzzed abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were pricked at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoomed her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stooped so low,
Marred her friend's point with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared,
Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who sat
With lips severely placid felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crushed the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore let me hence."
She answered, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answered he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wherever he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit you well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allowed, she slipped away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word hummed in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echoed in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answered it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know you my lord's name is Lancelot?"

Digitized by Google

But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turned Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were rendered mystically,
Passed up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Though carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Streamed from it still; and in her heart she laughed,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gained the cell in which he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he rolled his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"
His eyes glistened; she fancied, "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assigned to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assigned, he kissed her face.
At once she slipped like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger through his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot looked and was perplexed in mind,
And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turned
Sighing, and feigned a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided through the fields,
And passed beneath the wildly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and passed
Down through the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she passed
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
Would, though he called his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Ubpore her: till the hermit, skilled in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straitened him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live:
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the sweet image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beamed on his fancy, spoke, he answered not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimmed her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmured, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turned, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "him or death" she muttered, "death or him,"
Again and like a burden, "him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deemed she looked her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever pressed upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have you done me, that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,

Digitized by Google

Seeing I must go to-day;" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister," answered Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—to be your wife."
And Lancelot answered, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you through the world."
And Lancelot answered, "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done."
"Nay, noble maid," he answered, "ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as though you were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."
While he spoke
She neither blushed nor shook, but deathly pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom through those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father, "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."
Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remained, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stripped off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and looked
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound:
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor left.
But still she heard him, still his picture formed
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answered with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching through the darkness, called; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixed
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing:

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and called
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face and thought,
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seemed a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,

Digitized by Google

And when you used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only you would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there you fixed
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because you would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the king.
And yet you would not; but this night I dreamed
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remained.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the king.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, you seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go,
So far, being sick? and wherefore would you look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answered, echoing "highest."
(He meant to break the passion in her.) "Nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame.
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, though my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he asked
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said—"you never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deemed her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings passed, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Passed like a shadow through the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Palled all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kissed her quiet brows, and saying to her,
"Sister, farewell forever," and again,
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead
Steered by the dumb went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold

Digitized by Google

Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seemed her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he well nigh kissed her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling uttered, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words;
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet oh, grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying through your court.
Our bond, is not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumors be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turned away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers, or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."
Saying which she seized,
And, through the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flashed, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flashed, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they passed away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leaned, in half disgust
At love, life, all things, on the window-ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly passed the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood armed, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that asked
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appalled them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to fairy land?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into fairy land."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turned the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors,
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wondered at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
At last the Queen herself and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime called the maid of Astolat,

Digitized by Google

Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan.
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."
Thus he read,
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touched were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell.
Though, had I dreamed the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And helped her from herself."
Then said the queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm),
"You might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have helped her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,
"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me through the world, she asked;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answered, "O my knight,
It will be to your worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshalled order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon.
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazoned on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly as homeward each, the Queen,
Who marked Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sighed in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answered with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur who beheld his cloudy brows
Approached him, and with full affection flung
One arm about his neck, and spake and said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watched thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
And let the younger and unskilled go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
For the wild people say wild things of thee,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answered Lancelot, "Fair she was, my king;
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the king.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She failed to bind, though being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answered nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watched
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said

Digitized by Google

Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and sweet,
You loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the lady of the lake
Stole from his mother—as the story runs—
She chanted snatches of mysterious song
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kissed me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drowned me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it;
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she willed it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

GUINEVERE.

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice; one low light betwixt them burned
Blurred by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred; he the nearest to the King,
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for this,
He chilled the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tampered with the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims
Were sharpened by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mocked the May,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and returned,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climbed to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wiliest and the worst; and more than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by
Spied where he couched, and as the gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering grove
Of grasses Lancelot plucked him by the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the Prince though marred with dust,
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn; for in those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;
But, if a man were halt or hunched, in him
By those whom God had made full-limbed and tall,
Scorn was allowed as part of his defect,
And he was answered softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went:
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.
But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she laughed
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shuddered, as the village wife who cries,
"I shudder, some one steps across my grave;"
Then laughed again, but faintlier, for indeed
She half foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:
Henceforward, too, the powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—
Held her awake: or if she slept, she dreamed
An awful dream; for then she seemed to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it, till it touched her, and she turned—
When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallowed all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.

Digitized by Google

And all this trouble did not pass but grew;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane; and at the last she said,
"O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again, some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
Before the people, and our lord the King."
And Lancelot ever promised, but remained,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."
And then they were agreed upon a night
(When the good King should not be there) to meet
And part forever. Passion-pale they met
And greeted: hands in hands, and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring; it was their last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought
His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony; and crying with full voice,
"Traitor, come out, ye are trapped at last," aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-like
Leaped on him, and hurled him headlong, and he fell
Stunned, and his creatures took and bare him off,
And all was still: then she, "The end is come,
And I am shamed forever;" and he said,
"Mine be the shame; mine was the sin: but rise,
And fly to my strong castle over-seas:
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the world."
She answered, "Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God, that thou couldst hide me from myself!
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom." So Lancelot got her horse,
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kissed, and parted weeping: for he passed,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,
And heard the spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan;
And in herself she moaned, "Too late, too late!"
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,
A blot in heaven, the raven, flying high,
Croaked, and she thought, "He spies a field of death;
For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she spake
There to the nuns, and said, "Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her time
To tell you:" and her beauty, grace, and power,
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
To ask it.
So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns;
Nor with them mixed, nor told her name, nor sought,
Wrapped in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
But communed only with the little maid,
Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness
Which often lured her from herself; but now,
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came, that Sir Modred had usurped the realm,
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King
Was waging war on Lancelot: then she thought,
"With what a hate the people and the King
Must hate me!" and bowed down upon her hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brooked
No silence, brake it, uttering, "Late! so late!
What hour, I wonder, now?" and when she drew
No answer, by-and-by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her, "Late, so late!"
Which when she heard, the Queen looked up, and said,
"O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."
Whereat, full willingly sang the little maid:

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
Oh, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
Oh, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling to her:

"Oh, pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words, the words of one so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;

Digitized by Google

And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor—ah, sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
For me, I thank the saints I am not great.
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done:
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good.
But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart muttered the Queen,
"Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?"
But openly she answered, "Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, there
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
"Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?"
But openly she spake and said to her:
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously:
"Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table—at the founding of it:
And rode thereto from Lyonnesse, and he said
That as he rode, an hour or may be twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused and turning—there,
All down the lonely coast of Lyonnesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
He saw them—headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west:
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice through all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he passed the dim-lit woods,
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed:
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheeled and broke
Flying, and linked again, and wheeled and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dreamed; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he longed for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry, bloated things
Shouldered the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran: so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen, and somewhat bitterly:
"Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,
Spirits and men: could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulousy again:
"Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;
And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
When round him bent the spirits of the hills
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame:
So said my father—and that night the bard
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
As wellnigh more than man, and railed at those
Who called him the false son of Gorloïs:
For there was no man knew from whence he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven, and then
They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea;
And that was Arthur; and they fostered him
Till he by miracle was approven king:
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well-might change the world.
But even in the middle of his song
He faltered, and his hand fell from the harp,
And pale he turned, and reeled, and would have fall'n,
But that they stayed him up; nor would he tell
His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen, "Lo! they have set her on,
Our simple seeming abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me," and bowed her head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with claspèd hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue
Full often, "And, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Digitized by Google

Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me too:
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
Of noblest manners, though himself would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
Killed in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen looked up and answered her:
"Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forebore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and these two
Were the most nobly-mannered men of all;
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen,
"Oh, closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he 'scape the doom of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harmed where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,
"Such as thou art be never maiden more
Forever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
And traitress!" When that storm of anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, "Get thee hence!"
Fled frighted. Then that other left alone
Sighed, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself: "The simple, fearful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent.
For what is true repentance but in thought—
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:
And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more."
And ev'n in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure (for the time
Was May-time, and as yet no sin was dreamed),
Rode under groves that looked a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seemed the heavens upbreaking through the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-ship,
That crowned the state pavilion of the King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,
And moving through the past unconsciously,
Came to that point, when first she saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sighed to find
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,
High, self-contained, and passionless, not like him,
"Not like my Lancelot"—while she brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper through the nunnery ran,
Then on a sudden the cry, "The King!" She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armèd feet
Through the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,
And grovelled with her face against the floor:
There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from the King:
And in the darkness heard his armèd feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but though changed the King's:
"Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honored, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,
The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown;

Digitized by Google

And knowest thou now from whence I come—from him,
From waging bitter war with him: and he,
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the King
Who made him knight; but many a knight was slain;
And many more, and all his kith and kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
And of this remnant will I leave a part,
True men who love me still, for whom I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harmed.
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my death.
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have erred not, that I march to meet my doom.
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live;
For thou hast spoiled the purpose of my life.
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinned.
For when the Roman left us, and their law
Relaxed its hold upon us, and the ways
Were filled with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done redressed a random wrong.
But I was first of all the kings who drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
And all this throve until I wedded thee!
Believing, 'lo mine help-mate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy.'
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;
Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
Sinned also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
And all through thee! so that this life of mine
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,
Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
To sit once more within his lonely hall,
And miss the wonted number of my knights,
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.
For which of us, who might be left, could speak
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
And I should evermore be vexed with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
For think not, though thou wouldst not love thy lord,
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:
For being through his cowardice allowed
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devilish leaps, and poisons half the young.
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!
Better the king's waste hearth and aching heart
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neighed
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death,
(When first I learned thee hidden here) is past.
The pang—which while I weighed thy heart with one
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn—is also past, in part.
And all is past, the sin is sinned, and I,
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinned; and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
'I loathe thee;' yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love through flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,

Digitized by Google

And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
Through the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against my sister's son,
Leagued with the lords of the White Horse and knights
Once mine, and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,
Farewell!"
And while she grovelled at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
And, in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
Perceived the waving of his hands that blessed.

Then, listening till those armèd steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
The casement: "Peradventure," so she thought,
"If I might see his face, and not be seen."
And lo! he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was lowered,
To which for crest the golden dragon clung
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-ship
Blaze, making all the night a stream of fire.
And even then he turned: and more and more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seemed the phantom of a Giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretched out her arms and cried aloud,
"O Arthur!" there her voice brake suddenly,
Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Fails in mid-air, but gathering at the base
Remakes itself, and flashes down the vale—
Went on in passionate utterance:
"Gone—my lord!
Gone through my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answered his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
Called me polluted: shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world.
What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,
Except he mocked me when he spake of hope;
His hope he called it; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him, and left me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God. Ah, great and gentle lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the height
To which I would not or I could not climb—
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
That pure severity of perfect light—
I wanted warmth and color which I found
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the King I love him though so late?
Now—ere he goes to the great battle? none:
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah, my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest:
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."
Here her hand
Grasped, made her veil her eyes: she looked and saw
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,
"Yea, little maid, for am *I* not forgiven?"
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
All round her, weeping: and her heart was loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and said:

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
Oh, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'Shame.'
I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like you;
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be prayed for; lie before your shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister and distribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in his eyes
Who ransomed us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own

Digitized by Google

And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said: they took her to themselves; and she
Still hoping, fearing "Is it yet too late?"
Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died,
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess lived
For three brief years, and there, an abbess, passed
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.
And Willy's wife has written: she never was overwise,
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.
Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.
"Here's a leg for a babe of a week!" says doctor; and he would be bound,
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!
I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.

I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well
That Jenny had tripped in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;
And all things looked half-dead, though it was the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!
But soiling another, Annie, will never make one's self clean.

And I cried myself wellnigh blind, and all of an evening late
I climbed to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupped the nightingale.

All of a sudden he stopped: there passed by the gate of the farm,
Willy—he didn't see me—and Jenny hung on his arm,
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

Willy stood up like a man, and looked the thing that he meant;
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking courtesy and went.
And I said, "Let us part: in a hundred years it 'll all be the same,
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

And he turned, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:
"Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;
But marry me out of hand: we too shall be happy still."

"Marry you, Willy?" said I, "but I needs must speak my mind,
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."

Digitized by Google

But he turned and clasped me in his arms, and answered, "No, love, no;"
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain:
I looked at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn:
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

But he cheered me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay:
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way:
Never jealous—not he: we had many a happy year;
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seemed so near.

But I wished it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died:
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget:
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you:
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team;
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive;
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five:
And Willy, my eldest born, at nigh threescore and ten;
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve;
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve:
And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I;
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad:
But mine is a time of peace, and there is grace to be had;
And God, not man, is the judge of us all when life shall cease;
And in this book, little Annie, the message is one of peace.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,
And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest,
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour—
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed?

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie: thank God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have passed away.
But stay with the old woman now: you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse: whoy, doctor 's abeän an' agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor yäale: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my yäale, for I beänt a-goon' to breäk my rule.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a says what 's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to säy the things that 'a do.

Digitized by Google

I 've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

Parson 's a beän loikewoise, an' a-sittin 'ere o' my bed.
"The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issen, my friend," 'a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done my duty by un, as I 'a done by the lond.

I arn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barn.
Thof a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch afoor my Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock* ower my yeäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I comed awaäy.

Bessy Marris's barn! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done my duty by un as I 'a done by the lond.

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
"The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issen, my friend," says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thof summun said it in 'aäste;
But a reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thornaby waäste.

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd un mysen;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,† for I 'eerd un aboot an aboot,
But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, and raäved an' rembled un oot.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun un theer a laäid on 'is faäce
Doon i' the woild 'enemies‡ afoor I comed to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toner 'ed shot an as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my yaäle.

Dubbut looäk at the waäste: theer war n't not feäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looäk at it now—
War n't worth nowt a haäcre, 'an now theer 's lots o' feäd,
Fourscore yows upon it an' some on it doon in seäd.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I mean'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squoire's an' load o' my oän.

Do godamoighty knaw what a 's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a monaged for Squoire come Michaelmas thirty year.

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' 'auf the cows to cauve an' Thornaby holms to plow!

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they sees ma a passin' by,
Says to thessen naw doot "What a mon a be sewer-ly!"
For they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a comed to the 'All;
I done my duty by Squoire an' I done my duty by all.

Squoire 's in Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For who 's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Noither a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the divil's oän teäm.
Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife they says is sweet,
But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to see it.

What atta staänin' theer for, an' doesn bring ma the yaäle?
Doctor 's a 'tottler, lass, and a 's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules for doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my yaäle I tell tha, an' gin I mun doy I mun doy.

* Cockchafer. † Bittern. ‡ Anemones.

Digitized by Google

TITHONUS.

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burden to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
To his great heart none other than a god!
I asked thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong hours indignant worked their wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
And though they could not end me, left me maimed
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learned,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watched—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not forever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground:
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

THE VOYAGE.

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheered the gale.
The broad seas swelled to meet the keel,
And swept behind: so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seemed to sail into the Sun!

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillared light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As through the slumber of the globe
Again we dashed into the dawn!

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lightened into view;
They climbed as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We passed long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloomed the low coast and quivering brine

Digitized by Google

With ashy rains, that spreading made
  Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and streaming flats, and floods
  Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
  Glowed for a moment as we past.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
  How swiftly streamed ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burned, at times
  With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
  From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
  But we nor paused for fruits nor flowers.

For one fair Vision ever fled
  Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we followed where she led,
  In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
  And fixed upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmured, "O my queen,
  I follow till I make thee mine."

And now we lost her, now she gleamed
  Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seemed
  Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
  Like heavenly Hope she crowned the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
  She bore the blade of Liberty.

And only one among us—him
  We pleased not—he was seldom pleased;
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
  But ours he swore were all diseased.
"A ship of fools," he shrieked in spite,
  "A ship of fools," he sneered and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
  He cast his body, and on we swept.

And never sail of ours was furled,
  Nor anchor dropped at eve or morn;
We loved the glories of the world,
  But laws of Nature were our scorn;
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
  But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
  And to and through the counter-gale?

Again to colder climes we came,
  For still we followed where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
  And half the crew are sick or dead.
But blind or lame or sick or sound
  We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
  And we may sail for evermore.

THE SAILOR-BOY.

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
  Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reached the ship and caught the rope,
  And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud,
  He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
"O boy, though thou art young and proud,
  I see the place where thou wilt lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix
  In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
  And in thy heart the scrawl shall play."

"Fool," he answered, "death is sure
  To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
  To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
  My sisters crying, 'Stay for shame;'
My father raves of death and wreck;
  They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

"God help me! save I take my part
  Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
  Far worse than any death to me."

NORTHERN FARMER.

NEW STYLE.

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that 's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou 's an ass for thy paaïns:
Theer 's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaïns.

Woä—theer 's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon 's parson's 'ouse—
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.*
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou 's been talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou 'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou 'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

Seeäed her to-daäy goä by—Saäint's daäy—they was ringing the bells.
She 's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot 's a beauty?—the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

* This week.

Digitized by Google

Do'ant be stunt:* taäke time? I knaws what
maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I
wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd
ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer
munny is!"

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy mother
coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o'
land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a
thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a
lass as 'ant nowt?

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt
when 'e 's dead,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle †
her breäd:
Why? fur 'e 's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver
git naw 'igher;
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e
coom'd to the shire.

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o'
'Varsity debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut
on em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to
lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd ‡ yowe: fur, Sammy,
'e married fur luvv.

Luvv? what 's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an'
'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä togither as they've good right
to do.
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny
laaïd by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it:
reäson why.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry
the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on
us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha?—an ass as near
as mays nowt §—
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell
as owt.‖

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out
o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what 's gentleman burn? is it
shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty 's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy,
I'm blest
If it is n't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as
it 's the best.

'T isn them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses
an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their
regular meäls.
Noä, but it 's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl
's to be 'ad. [loomp is bad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a
laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver
munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästwaäys 'is mun-
ny was 'id. [good un, 'e dead.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck comes
out by the 'ill!
Feyther run up to the farm, an' I runs up to
the mill;
An' I 'll run up to the brig, an' that thou 'll live
to see; [land to thee.
And if thou marries a good un I 'll leäve the

Thim 's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means
to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I 'll leäve the land
to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that 's what I
'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter
awaäy.

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head, [save.
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie;
Go by, go by.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill:
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

* Obstinate.
† Earn.
‡ Or fow-weltered—said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.
§ Makes nothing.
‖ The flies are as fierce as any thing.

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM BARNES.

WILLIAM BARNES was born in Dorsetshire in 1810. His father was a farmer. With but limited educational advantages, he acquired a surprising amount of learning, especially on philological subjects. He taught school for some years in his native county, but took orders, and became curate of Whitcombe in 1847 and rector of Winterbourn Came in 1862. He has published a "Grammar of the Dorset Dialect," a "Philological Grammar," which involves a comparison of more than sixty languages, "Tiev; or, a View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue," an "Anglo-Saxon Dialectus," "Views of Labor and Gold," and a treatise on linear perspective. In 1864 he published "Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect," and in 1868 "Poems of Rural Life, in Common English."

IN THE DORSET DIALECT.

BLACKMWORE MAIDENS.

THE primrwose in the sheade do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An' where do pretty maidens grow
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns,
In Blackmwore by the Stour?

If you could zee their comely gait,
An' pretty feaces' smiles,
A-trippen on so light o' waight,
An' steppen off the stiles;
A-gwain to church, as bells do swing
An' ring within the tow'r,
You 'd own the pretty maidens' pleace
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daeters at the door;
You 'd cry to bachelors at hwome—
"Here, come: 'ithin an hour
You'll vind ten maidens to your mind,
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

An' if you looked 'ithin their door,
To zee 'em in their pleace,
A-doen housework up avore
Their smilen mother's feace;
You 'd cry—"Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in May,
There out upon the beaten grass
Wer maidens at their play;
An' as the pretty souls did twile
An' smile, I cried, "The flow 'r
O' beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

DAY'S WORK A-DONE.

AND oh! the jay our rest did yield,
At evenen by the mossy wall,
When we 'd a-work'd all day a-vield,
While zummer zuns did rise an' vall
As there a-letten
Goo all fretten,
An' vorgetten all our twiles,
We zot among our childern's smiles.

An' under skies that glitter'd white,
The while our smoke, arisen blue,
Did melt in aier, out o' zight,
Above the trees that kept us low;
Wer birds a-zingen,
Tongues a-ringen,
Childern springen, vull o' jay,
A-finishen the day in play.

An' back behine, a-stannen tall,
The cliff did feace the western light;
Avore us wer the water-fall,
A-rottlen loud, an' foamen white.
An' leaves did quiver,
Gnots did whiver,
By the river, where the pool,
In evenen air did glissen cool.

An' there the childern, runnen wide,
Did play their geames along the grove,
Vor though 'twer ouer jay to bide
A-zot at rest, 'twer theirs to move.
The while my smilen
Jeane, beguilen,
All my twilen, wi' her ceare,
Did call me to my evenen feare.

Digitized by Google

THE MOTHERLESS CHILD.

The zun wer zet back t'other night,
But in the zetten pleace
The clouds, a-redden'd by his light,
Still glow'd avore my feace.
An' I 've a-lost my Meary's smile,
I thought; but still I have her chile,
Zoo lik' her, that my eyes can treace
The mother's in her daeter's feace.
O little feace so near to me,
An' lik' thy mother's gone; why need I zae,
Sweet night cloud, wi' the glow o' my lost dae,
Thy looks be always dear to me?

The zun wer zet another night;
But, by the moon on high,
He still did zend us back his light
Below a cwolder sky.
My Meary 's in a better land,
I thought, but still her chile 's at hand,
An' in her chile she 'll zend me on
Her love, though she herself 's a-gone.
O little chile so near to me,
An' lik' thy mother gone; why need I zae,
Sweet moon, the messenger vrom my lost dae,
Thy looks be always dear to me?

FAETHERHOOD.

Let en zit, wi' his dog an' his cat,
Wi' ther noses a-turn'd to the vire,
An' have all that a man should desire;
But ther idden much readship in that.
Whether vo'k mid have childern or no,
Wou'dden meake mighty odds in the main;
They do bring us mwore jay wi' mwore ho,
An' wi mwore we 've less jay wi' less pain.
We be all lik' a zull's idle sheare out,
An' shall rust out, unless we do wear out,
Lik' do-nothen, rue-nothen,
Dead alive dumps.

As vor me, why my life idden bound
To my own heart alwone, among men;
I do live in myzelf, and agean
In the lives o' my childern all round:
I do live wi' my bwoy in his play,
An' agean wi' my maid in her zongs;
An' my heart is a-stirr'd wi' ther jay,
An' would burn at the zight o' ther wrongs.
I ha' nine lives, an' zoo if a haef
O'm do cry, why the rest o'm mid laef
All so playvully, jayvully,
Happy wi' hope.

T'other night I come hwome a long road,
When the weather did sting an' did vreeze;
An' the snow—vor the dae had a-snow'd—
Wer avroze on the boughs o' the trees;
An' my tooes an' my vingers wer num',
An' my veet wer as lumpy as logs,
An' my ears wer so red 's a cock's cwom';
An' my nose wer so cwold as a dog's;
But as soon' s I got hwome I vorgot
Where my limbs wer a-cwold or wer hot,
When wi' loud cries an' proud cries
They coll'd me so cwold.

Vor the vu'st that I happen'd to meet
Come to pull my gertcwoat vrom my earm,
An' another did rub my feace warm,
An' another hot-slipper'd my veet;
While ther mother did cast on a stick,
Vor to keep the red vier alive,
An' they all come so busy an' thick
As the bees vlee-en into ther hive,
An' they meade me so happy an' proud,
That my heart could ha' crow'd out a-loud;
They did twile zoo, an' zmile zoo,
An' coll'd me so cwold.

As I zot wi' my teacup, at rest,
Ther I pull'd out the tays I did bring;
Men a-kicken, a wagg'd wi' a string,
An' goggle-ey'd dolls to be drest;
An' oh! vrom the childern there sprung
Such a charm when they handled ther tays,
That vor pleasure the bigger oones wrung
Ther two hands at the zight o' ther jays;
As the bwoys' bigger vaices vell in
Wi' the maidens a-titteren thin,
An' ther dancen an' prancen,
An' little mouth'd laefs.

Though 'tis hard stripes to breed 'em all up,
If I 'm only a-blest from above,
They 'll make me amends wi' ther love,
Vor ther pillor, ther pleate, an' ther cup;
Though I shall be never a-spwil'd
Wi' the sarvice that money can buy;
Still the hands ov a wife an' a child
Be the blessens ov low or ov high;
An' if ther be mouths to be fed,
He that zent 'em can zend me ther bread,
An' will smile on the chile
That's a-new on the knee.

MEARY WEDDED.

The zun can zink, the stars mid rise,
An' woods be green to sheenen skies;
The cock mid crow to mornen light,
An' workvo'k zing to vallen night;
The birds mid whissle on the spray,
An' childern leap in merry play,
But ours is now a lifeless pleace,
Vor we 've a-lost a smilen face—
Young Meary Mead o' merry mood,
Vor she 's a-woo'd an' wedded.

The dog that oonce wer glad to bear
Her fondlen vingers down his heair,
Do lean his head agean the vloor,
To watch, wi' heavy eyes, the door;
An' men she zent so happy hwome,
O' Zadderdaes, do seem to come
To door, wi' downcast hearts, to miss
Wi' smiles below the clematis,
Young Meary Mead o' merry mood,
Vor she 's a-woo'd an' wedded.

When they do drae the evenen blind,
An' when the evenen light 's a-tin'd,
The cheerless vire do drow a gleare
O' light agean her empty chair;

Digitized by Google

An' wordless gaps do now meake thin
Their talk where oonce her vaice come in.
Zoo lwonesome is her empty pleace,
An' blest the house that ha' the feace
O' Meary Mead o' merry mood,
Now she 's a-woo'd an' wedded.

The day she left her faether's he'th,
Though sad, wer kept a day o' me'th,
An' dry-wheel'd waggons' empty beds
Wer left 'ithin the tree-screen'd sheds;
An' all the hosses, at their ease,
Went snorten up the flow'ry lease,
But oone, the smartest for the road,
That pull'd away the dearest lwoad—
Young Meary Mead o' merry mood,
That wer a-woo'd and wedded.

THE STWONEN BWOY UPON THE PILLAR.

Wi' smokeless tuns and empty halls,
An' moss a-clingen to the walls,
In ev'ry wind the lofty tow'rs
Do teake the zun, an' bear the show'rs;
An' there, 'ithin a geat a-hung,
But vassen'd up, an' never swung,
Upon the pillar, all alwone,
Do stan' the little bwoy o' stwone;
The seame's a poppy, ling'ren on
Vorseaken, when the wheat 's a-gone.
An' there, then, wi' his bow let slack,
An' little quiver at his back,
Droo het an' wet, the little chile
Vrom day to day do stan' an' smile,
When vu'st the light, a-risen weak,
At break o' dae, do smite his cheak,
Or while at noon the leafy bough
Do cast a sheade athirt his brow,
Or when at night the warm-breath'd cows
Do sleep by moon-belighted boughs;
An' there the while the rooks do bring
Their scroff to build their nest in spring,
Or zwallows in the zummer dae
Do cling their little huts o' clay,
'Ithin the rainless sheades, below
The steadvast arches' mossy bow.
Or when, in fall, the woak do shed
The leaves a-wither'd vrom his head,
An' western win's, a-blowen cool,
Do dreve 'em out athirt the pool,
Or winter's clouds do gather dark,
An' wet wi' rain the elem's bark,
You 'll zee his perty smile betwixt
His little sheade-mark'd lips a-fix'd;
As there his little sheape do bide
Droo dae an' night, an' time an' tide,
An' never change his size or dress,
Nor awvergrow his prettiness.
But, oh! thik child that we do vind
In childhood still, do call to mind
A little bwoy a-call'd by death,
Long years agoo, vrom our sad he'th;
An' I, in thought, can zee en dim
The seame in feace, the seame in lim',
My heair mid whiten as the snow,
My limbs grow weak, my step wear slow,
My droopen head mid slowly vall
Above the han'-staff's glossy ball,
An' eet, vor all a wid'nen span
Ov years, mid change a liven man,
My little chile do still appear
To me wi' all his childhood's gear,
'Ithout a beard upon his chin,
'Ithout a wrinkle in his skin,
A-liven on, a chile the seame
In look, an' sheape, an' size, an' neame.

THE SLANTEN LIGHT O' FALL.

Ah! Jeane, my maid, I stood to you,
When you wer' cristen'd, small an' light,
Wi' tiny earms o' red an' blue,
A-hangen in your robe o' white.
We brought ye to the hallow'd stwone,
Vor Christ to teake ye vor his own,
When harvest-work wer' all a-done,
An' time brought round October zun—
The slanten light o' Fall.

An' I can mind the wind wer' rough,
An' gather'd clouds, but brought noo storms,
An' you wer' nessled warm enough,
'Ithin your smilen mother's earms.
The whindlen grass did quiver light,
Among the stubble, feaded white,
An' if at times the zunlight broke
Upon the groun', or on the vo'k,
'T wer' slanten light o' Fall.

An' when we brought ye droo the door
O' Knapton Church, a child o' greace,
There cluster'd roun' a'most a score
O' vo'k to zee your tiny feace.
An' there we all did veel so proud,
To zee an op'nen in the cloud,
An' then a stream o' light break droo,
A-sheenen brightly down on you—
The slanten light o' Fall.

But now your time 's a-come to stan'
In church a-blushen at my zide,
The while a bridegroom vrom my han'
Ha' took ye vor his faithvul bride.
Your Christian neame we gi'd ye here,
When Fall did cool the western year;
An' now, agean, we brought ye droo
The doorway, wi' your surneame new,
In slanten light o' Fall.

An' zoo vur, Jeane, your life is feair,
An' God ha' been your steadvast friend,
An' mid ye have more jay than ceare,
Vor ever, till your journey's end.
An' I 've a-watch'd ye on wi' pride,
But now I soon mus' leave your zide,
Vor you ha' still life's spring-tide zun,
But my life, Jeane, is now a-run
To slanten light o' Fall.

Digitized by Google

IN COMMON ENGLISH.

AUTUMN.

The long-lighted days begin to shrink,
And flowers are thin in mead among
The late-shooting grass, that shines along
Brook upon brook, and brink by brink.

The wheat, that was lately rustling thick,
Is now up in mows that still are new;
All yellow before the sky of blue,
Tip after tip, and rick by rick.

No starlings arise in flock on wing;
The cuckoo has stilled his woodland sound;
The swallow no longer wheels around,
Dip after dip, and swing by swing.

While shooters are roving round the knoll,
By wind-driven leaves on quiv'ring grass,
Or down where the sky-blue waters pass,
Fall after fall, and shoal by shoal;

Their brown-dappled pointers nimbly trot
By russet-boughed trees, while gun-smoke gray
Dissolves in the air of sunny day,
Reef upon reef, at shot by shot.

While now I can walk a dusty mile,
I'll take me a day while days are clear,
To find a few friends that still are dear,
Face upon face, and smile by smile.

THE CHILD LOST.

When evening is closing in all round,
And winds in the dark-boughed timber sound,
The flame of my candle, dazzling bright,
May shine full clear—full clear may shine,
But never can show my child to sight.

And warm is the bank, where boughs are still,
On timber below the windward hill,
But now, in the stead of summer hay,
Dead leaves are cast—are cast dead leaves,
Where lately I saw my child at play.

And oh! could I see, as may be known
To angels, my little maid full grown,
As time would have made her, woman tall,
If she had lived—if lived had she,
And not have died now, so young and small.

Do children that go to heaven play?
Are young that were gay in heaven gay?
Are old people bowed by weakening time,
In heaven bowed—all bowed in heaven?
Or else are they all in blissful prime?

Yes, blest with all blessings are the blest,
Their lowest of good's above our best,
So show me the highest soul you can
In shape and mind—in mind and shape
Yet far above him is heaven's man.

NOT FAR TO GO.

As upland fields were sunburnt brown,
And heat-dried brooks were running small,
And sheep were gathered panting all,
Below the hawthorn on the down;
The while my mare, with dipping head,
Pulled on my cart, above the bridge;
I saw come on, beside the ridge,
A maiden, white in skin and thread,
And walking with an elbow load,
The way I drove, along my road.

As there, with comely steps, up-hill
She rose by elm-trees, all in ranks,
From shade to shade, by flowery banks,
Where flew the bird with whistling bill,
I kindly said, "Now won't you ride,
This burning weather, up the knap?
I have a seat that fits the trap—
And now is swung from side to side."
"Oh, no," she cried; "I thank you, no.
I've little farther now to go."

Then, up the timbered slope, I found
The prettiest house, a good day's ride
Would bring you by, with porch and side,
By rose and jessamine well bound,
And near at hand, a spring and pool,
With lawn well sunned and bower cool:
And while the wicket fell behind
Her steps, I thought, if I would find
A wife, I need not blush to show,
I've little farther now to go.

CHANGES.

And oh! what changes we all know,
Long years can bring in one small place,
In names and shapes, from face to face,
As souls will come and souls will go:
And here, where hills have all stood fast,
While babes have come and men have passed,
The wind-stream softly seems to sigh,
"Man's lifetime glides away as I."

The child may open here his eyes,
Long miles away to live a man,
The mother here may end her span
Of life, where no dear daughter lies.
As time steals on from day to day,
And nothing stands at one same stay,
The wind-blast softly seems to sigh,
"Man's lifetime glides away as I."

As clapper-sounded bells ring fast,
They tell the moments out, and clocks
That slowly sound by knocks on knocks,
May tell how daily hours have passed;
In Sunday chimes a week is fled,
In Easter knells a year is dead,
And airy bell-sounds seem to say,
"Like us man's lifetime glides away."

Digitized by Google

THE STONEN STEPS.

A MAN AND HIS FRIEND.

M. THESE stonen steps that stand so true
With tread on tread, a foot-reach wide,
Have always climbed the sloping side
Of this steep ledge, for me and you;
Had people built the steps before
They turned the arch of our old door?
Were these old stairs laid down by man,
Before the bridge's archèd span?
Did workmen set these stones so trim
Before they built the spire so slim?
Fr. Ah! who can tell when first, ay who—
These steps first bore a shoe?

M. And here, beside the sloping hump,
From stone to stone with faces flat,
The little-footed children pat,
And heavy-booted menfolk clump;
But which the last may beat a shoe,
On these old stones, shall I or you?
Which little boy of mine shall climb
These well-worn steps, the last in time?
Which girl, childquick, or womanslow,
Shall walk the last these stones in row?
Fr. Ay, who among us now can know
Who last shall come or go?

M. The road leads on, below these blocks
To yonder springhead's stony cove,
And Meldon Hall; and elm-tree grove,
And mill, beside the foamy rocks,
And up these well-worn blocks of stone
I came when I first ran alone,
The stonen stairs beclimbed the mound,
Ere father put a foot to ground,
'T was up the steps his father came,
To make his mother change her name.
Fr. Ay, who can ever tell what pairs
Of feet once trod the stairs?

AT THE DOOR.

THE waters roll, quick-bubbling by the shoal,
Or leap the rock, outfoaming in a bow.
The wind blows free in gushes round the tree,
Along the grove of oaks in double row,
Where lovers seek the maidens' evening floor,
With stip-step light, and tip-tap slight,
Against the door.

With iron bound, the wheel-rims roll around,
And crunch the crackling flint below their load.
The gravel, trod by horses iron-shod,
All crackles shrill along the beaten road,
Where lovers come to seek, in our old place,
With stip-step light, and tip-tap slight,
The maiden's face.

And oh! how sweet 's the time the lover's feet
May come before the door to seek a bride,
As he may stand and knock with shaking hand,
And lean to hear the sweetest voice inside;
While there a heart will leap, to hear once more
The stip-step light, and tip-tap slight,
Against the door.

How sweet 's the time when we are in our prime,
With children, now our care and aye our joy,
And child by child may scamper, skipping wild,
Back home from school or play-games, girl or boy,
And there upon the door-stone leap once more,
With stip-step light, and tip-tap slight,
Against the door.

Be my abode, beside some up-hill road,
Where people pass along, if not abide,
And not a place where day may bring no face
With kindly smiles, as lonesome hours may glide;
But let me hear some friend, well known before,
With stip-step light, and tip-tap slight,
Against the door.

THE OLD CLOCK.

THAT old clock's face yet keeps its place,
And wheels its hands around;
His bob still swings, his bell still rings,
As when I heard his sound,
On leaving home so long ago,
And left him ticking, ticking slow.

No rust yet clogs its catching cogs,
To keep its wheels all still;
No blow e'er fell to crack his bell,
That hourly ringles shrill.
I wish my life were guided on
As true as that old clock has gone.

Who now may wind his chain, untwined
In running out his hours,
Or make a gloss to shine across
His door, with golden flowers,
Since he has sounded out the last
Still hours our dear good mother passed?

WHEN WE THAT HAVE CHILDREN WERE CHILDREN.

AH! where the hedge across the hill
With high-grown boughs did grow,
And ashes' limbs were widely spread,
With up-grown tips, above our head,
And out and in, with broken brink,
The brook ran on below.

As wind-blown leaves were driven dry
In drifts, we hastened through
The grove, where frost yet lingered white,
In shadows cast by winter light,
To reach our homely house ere night
Should hide our path from view.

As you might touch, with nimble tips
Of toes, the ground, so, fleet
In whirling wind, would gather strong
Behind the frock you swept along
The ruddy leaves, and lift them up
In leaps, behind your feet.

But now, again, in treading trim
Our track, the same old way,
We both walk on with slower gait,
On feet that bear our full-grown weight,
And leave our little children's toes
To leap, and run in play.

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born in 1811, in Calcutta, where his father was in the service of the East India Company. He was educated at the Charter-house, London, and at Cambridge, but did not take a degree. He inherited £20,000, and after coming of age travelled in France, Germany, and Italy, to study art, intending to follow it as a profession. He seems not to have been very successful, except in the drawing of caricatures.

By the time he was thirty years of age he had lost a large part of his fortune, through speculation and bad investments, and he then set himself to make a living by literature. He contributed to various London journals and to "Fraser's Magazine" sketches, tales, poems, and criticisms, under the pseudonymes of Michael Angelo Titmarsh and George Fitz-Boodle. His first serial was "The Great Hoggarty Diamond," which appeared in "Fraser's" in 1841. His "Paris Sketch-Book" had been published in 1840, and the "Second Funeral of Napoleon" and the "Chronicle of the Drum" followed in 1841, and the "Irish Sketch-Book" in 1843.

None of these were popular. He abounded in fine touches of irony and natural, unstrained sarcasm, but there was no broad caricature to challenge the general attention.

When "Punch" was established in 1841, Thackeray became one of its first writers. His first series of papers were under the signature of "The Fat Contributor," his second was "Jeames's Diary," and his third "The Snob Papers." He also contributed many humorous poems. These attracted attention and gradually gave him a reputation. In 1846 he published "Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo," and in the same year a Christmas-book entitled "Mrs. Perkins's Ball." His "Vanity Fair," illustrated by himself, had gone begging for a publisher, but at last appeared in monthly numbers in 1846–'8, and at once placed him beside Dickens in the popular estimation. A Christmas-book entitled "Our Street" appeared in 1848, and another entitled "Dr. Birch and his Young Friend" in 1849. "The History of Pendennis," published serially, was completed in 1850.

In 1851 Thackeray made his *début* in London as a lecturer, with a delightful series of discourses on "The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century." These lectures were repeated in Scotland and the United States, which he visited in 1855, and finally were published in 1853. Ten thousand copies were sold in one week. Another series, on "The Four Georges," were first delivered in the United States. The "History of Henry Esmond, Esq.," was published in 1852, and "The Newcomes" appeared serially, being completed in 1855. These novels, with "Vanity Fair," are generally recognized as his masterpieces. "The Virginians" was published serially in 1857–'8.

In January, 1860, the "Cornhill Magazine" was started with Thackeray as editor, and it soon had a circulation of 100,000. His lectures on "The Four Georges," his novels "Lovel the Widower" and "Adventures of Philip on his Way through the World," and his "Roundabout Papers," first appeared in its pages. His "Ballads" were first published collectively in 1855.

Thackeray was found dead in his bed on the morning of December 24, 1863. He left unfinished "Denis Duval," a novel, which was published in 1864. A collection of his scattered articles, edited by James T. Fields, was published in 1867, under the title "Early and Late Papers."

THE WHITE SQUALL.

On deck, beneath the awning,
I dozing lay and yawning;
It was the gray of dawning,
  Ere yet the sun arose;
And above the funnel's roaring,
And the fitful wind's deploring,
I heard the cabin snoring
  With universal nose.
I could hear the passengers snorting—
I envied their disporting—
Vainly I was courting
  The pleasure of a doze!

So I lay, and wondered why light
Came not, and watched the twilight,
And the glimmer of the skylight
  That shot across the deck;
And the binnacle pale and steady;
And the dull glimpse of the dead-eye,
And the sparks in fiery eddy
  That whirled from the chimney-neck.
In our jovial floating prison
There was sleep from fore to mizzen,
And never a star had risen
  The hazy sky to speck.

Strange company we harbored;
We 'd a hundred Jews to larboard,

Digitized by Google

Unwashed, uncombed, unbarbered—
  Jews black, and brown, and gray,
With terror it would seize ye,
And make your souls uneasy,
To see those Rabbis greasy,
  Who did naught but scratch and pray:
Their dirty children puking—
Their dirty saucepans cooking—
Their dirty fingers hooking
  Their swarming fleas away.

To starboard, Turks and Greeks were—
Whiskered and brown their cheeks were—
Enormous wide their breeks were—
  Their pipes did puff alway;
Each on his mat allotted
In silence smoked and squatted,
While round their children trotted
  In pretty, pleasant play.
He can't but smile who traces
The smiles on those brown faces,
And the pretty prattling graces
  Of those small heathens gay.

And so the hours kept tolling,
And through the ocean rolling
Went the brave "Iberia" bowling
  Before the break of day—
When a SQUALL, upon a sudden,
Came o'er the water scudding;
And the clouds began to gather,
And the sea was lashed to lather,
And the lowering thunder grumbled,
And the lightning jumped and tumbled,
And the ship and all the ocean,
Woke up in wild commotion.
Then the wind set up a howling,
And the poodle dog a yowling,
And the cocks began a crowing,
And the old cow raised a lowing,
As she heard the tempest blowing:
And fowls and geese did cackle,
And the cordage and the tackle
Began to shriek and crackle;
And the spray dashed o'er the funnels,
And down the deck in runnels;
And the rushing water soaks all,
From the seamen in the fo'ksal
To the stokers whose black faces
Peer out of their bed-places;
And the captain he was bawling,
And the sailors pulling, hauling,
And the quarter-deck tarpauling
Was shivered in the squalling;
And the passengers awaken,
Most pitifully shaken;
And the steward jumps up and hastens
For the necessary basins.

Then the Greeks they groaned and quivered,
And they knelt, and moaned, and shivered,
As the plunging waters met them,
And splashed and overset them;
And they call in their emergence
Upon countless saints and virgins;
And their marrow-bones are bended,
And they think the world is ended.

And the Turkish women for'ard
Were frightened and behorrored;
And shrieking and bewildering,
The mothers clutched their children;
The men sang "Allah! Illah!
Mashallah Bismillah!"
As the warring waters doused them
And splashed them and soused them,
And they called upon the Prophet,
And thought but little of it.

Then all the fleas in Jewry
Jumped and bit like fury;
And the progeny of Jacob
Did on the main-deck wake up
(I wot those greasy Rabbins
Would never pay for cabins);
And each man moaned and jabbered in
His filthy Jewish garberdine,
In woe and lamentation,
And howling consternation.
And the splashing water drenches
Their dirty brats and wenches;
And they crawl from bales and benches
In a hundred thousand stenches.

This was the White Squall famous,
Which latterly o'ercame us,
And which all will well remember
On the 28th September;
When a Prussian Captain of Lancers
(Those tight-laced, whiskered prancers)
Came on the deck astonished,
By that wild squall admonished,
And wondering cried, "Potztausend,
Wie ist der Sturm jetzt brausend!"
And looked at Captain Lewis,
Who calmly stood and blew his
Cigar in all the bustle,
And scorned the tempest's tussle,
And oft we 've thought thereafter
How he beat the storm with laughter;
For well he knew his vessel
With that vain wind could wrestle;
And when a wreck we thought her,
And doomed ourselves to slaughter,
How gayly he fought her,
And through the hubbub brought her,
And as the tempest caught her,
Cried, "GEORGE! SOME BRANDY-AND-WATER!"

And when, its force expended,
The harmless storm was ended,
And as the sunrise splendid
  Came blushing o'er the sea;
I thought, as day was breaking,
My little girls were waking,
And smiling, and making
  A prayer at home for me.

PEG OF LIMAVADDY.

RIDING from Coleraine
  (Famed for lovely Kitty),
Came a Cockney bound
  Unto Derby city;
Weary was his soul,
  Shivering and sad, he
Bumped along the road
  Leads to Limavaddy.

Digitized by Google

Mountains stretched around,
  Gloomy was their tinting,
And the horse's hoofs
  Made a dismal clinting;
Wind upon the heath
  Howling was and piping,
On the heath and bog,
  Black with many a snipe in.
'Mid the bogs of black,
  Silver pools were flashing,
Crows upon their sides
  Picking were and splashing.
Cockney on the car
  Closer folds his plaidy,
Grumbling at the road
  Leads to Limavaddy.

Through the crashing woods
  Autumn brawled and blustered,
Tossing round about
  Leaves the hue of mustard;
Yonder lay Lough Foyle,
  Which a storm was whipping,
Covering with mist
  Lake and shores and shipping.
Up and down the hill
  (Nothing could be bolder),
Horse went with a raw
  Bleeding on his shoulder.
"Where are horses changed?"
  Said I to the laddy
Driving on the box:
  "Sir, at Limavaddy."

Limavaddy inn 's
  But a humble bait-house,
Where you may procure
  Whiskey and potatoes;
Landlord at the door
  Gives a smiling welcome—
To the shivering wights
  Who to his hotel come.
Landlady within
  Sits and knits a stocking,
With a wary foot
  Baby's cradle rocking.
To the chimney-nook
  Having found admittance,
There I watch a pup
  Playing with two kittens
(Playing round the fire,
  Which of blazing turf is,
Roaring to the pot
  Which bubbles with the murphies).
And the cradle babe
  Fond the mother nursed it,
Singing it a song
  As she twists the worsted!

Up and down the stair
  Two more young ones patter
(Twins were never seen
  Dirtier nor fatter).
Both have mottled legs,
  Both have snubby noses,
Both have—Here the host
  Kindly interposes:
"Sure you must be froze
  With the sleet and hail, sir:
So will you have some punch,
  Or will you have some ale, sir?"

Presently a maid
  Enters with the liquor
(Half a pint of ale
  Frothing in a beaker).
Gads! I did n't know
  What my beating heart meant:
Hebe's self I thought
  Entered the apartment.
As she came she smiled,
  And the smile bewitching,
On my word and honor,
  Lighted all the kitchen!

With a courtesy neat
  Greeting the new-comer,
Lovely, smiling Peg
  Offers me the rummer:
But my trembling hand
  Up the beaker tilted,
And the glass of ale
  Every drop I spilt it:
Spilt it every drop
  (Dames who read my volumes,
Pardon such a word)
  On my what-d'ye-call-'ems!

Witnessing the sight
  Of that dire disaster,
Out began to laugh
  Missis, maid, and master;
Such a merry peal
  'Specially Miss Peg's was
(As the glass of ale
  Trickling down my legs was),
That the joyful sound
  Of that mingling laughter
Echoed in my ears
  Many a long day after.

Such a silver peal!
  In the meadows listening,
You who 've heard the bells
  Ringing to a christening;
You who ever heard
  Caradori pretty,
Smiling like an angel,
  Singing "Giovinetti;"
Fancy Peggy's laugh,
  Sweet, and clear, and cheerful,
At my pantaloons
  With half a pint of beer full!

When the laugh was done,
  Peg, the pretty hussy,
Moved about the room
  Wonderfully busy;
Now she looks to see
  If the kettle keep hot;
Now she rubs the spoons,
  Now she cleans the teapot;
Now she sets the cups
  Trimly and secure:
Now she scours a pot,
  And so it was I drew her.

Thus it was I drew her
  Scouring of a kettle,
(Faith! her blushing cheeks
  Reddened on the metal!)

Digitized by Google

Ah! but 't is in vain
  That I try to sketch it;
The pot perhaps is like,
  But Peggy's face is wretched.
No! the best of lead
  And of Indian-rubber
Never could depict
  That sweet kettle-scrubber!

See her as she moves!
  Scarce the ground she touches.
Airy as a fay,
  Graceful as a duchess;
Bare her rounded arm,
  Bare her little leg is,
Vestris never showed
  Ankles like to Peggy's.
Braided is her hair,
  Soft her look and modest,
Slim her little waist
  Comfortably bodiced.

This I do declare,
  Happy is the laddy
Who the heart can share
  Of Peg of Limavaddy.
Married if she were,
  Blest would be the daddy
Of the children fair
  Of Peg of Limavaddy.
Beauty is not rare
  In the land of Paddy,
Fair beyond compare
  Is Peg of Limavaddy.

Citizen or Squire,
  Tory, Whig, or Radical,
Would all desire
  Peg of Limavaddy.
Had I Homer's fire,
  Or that of Sergeant Taddy,
Meetly I 'd admire
  Peg of Limavaddy.
And till I expire,
  Or till I grow mad, I
Will sing unto my lyre
  Peg of Limavaddy!

THE MAHOGANY-TREE.

Christmas is here:
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we:
Little we fear
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The Mahogany-Tree.

Once on the boughs
Birds of rare plume
Sang, in its bloom;
Night-birds are we:
Here we carouse,
Singing like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—
When we are gone,
Let them sing on,
Round the old tree.

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust!
We sing round the tree.

Care, like a dun,
Lurks at the gate:
Let the dog wait;
Happy we 'll be!
Drink, every one;
Pile up the coals,
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree!

Drain we the cup—
Friend, art afraid?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up;
Empty it yet;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree!

Sorrows, begone!
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.
Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite,
Leave us to-night,
Round the old tree.

LUCY'S BIRTHDAY.

Seventeen rose-buds in a ring,
Thick with sister flowers beset,
In a fragrant coronet,
Lucy's servants this day bring.
Be it the birthday wreath she wears
Fresh and fair, and symbolling
The young number of her years,
The sweet blushes of her spring.

Types of youth and love and hope!
Friendly hearts your mistress greet,
Be you ever fair and sweet,
And grow lovelier as you ope!
Gentle nursling, fenced about
With fond care, and guarded so,
Scarce you 've heard of storms without,
Frosts that bite, or winds that blow!

Kindly has your life begun,
And we pray that Heaven may send

Digitized by Google

To our floweret a warm sun,
A calm summer, a sweet end.
And where'er shall be her home,
May she decorate the place;
Still expanding into bloom,
And developing in grace.

THE CANE-BOTTOMED CHAIR.

In tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
And a ragged old jacket perfumed with cigars,
Away from the world and its toils and its cares,
I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs.

To mount to this realm is a toil, to be sure,
But the fire there is bright and the air rather pure;
And the view I behold on a sunshiny day
Is grand through the chimney-pots over the way.

This snug little chamber is crammed in all nooks
With worthless old knick-knacks and silly old books,
And foolish old odds and foolish old ends,
Cracked bargains from brokers, cheap keepsakes from friends.

Old armor, prints, pictures, pipes, china (all cracked),
Old rickety tables, and chairs broken-backed;
A twopenny treasury, wondrous to see;
What matter? 't is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

No better divan need the Sultan require,
Than the creeking old sofa that basks by the fire;
And 't is wonderful, surely, what music you get
From the rickety, ramshackle, wheezy spinet.

That praying-rug came from a Turcoman's camp;
By Tiber once twinkled that brazen old lamp;
A Mameluke fierce yonder dagger has drawn:
'T is a murderous knife to toast muffins upon.

Long, long, through the hours, and the night, and the chimes,
Here we talk of old books, and old friends, and old times;
As we sit in a fog made of rich Latakie
This chamber is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
There 's one that I love and I cherish the best:
For the finest of couches that 's padded with hair
I never would change thee, my cane-bottomed chair.

'T is a bandy-legged, high-shouldered, worm-eaten seat,
With a creaking old back, and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when Fanny sat there,
I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottomed chair.

If chairs have but feeling, in holding such charms,
A thrill must have passed through your withered old arms;
I looked, and I longed, and I wished in despair;
I wished myself turned to a cane-bottomed chair.

It was but a moment she sat in this place,
She 'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
And she sat there, and bloomed in my cane-bottomed chair.

And so I have valued my chair ever since,
Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince;
Saint Fanny, my patroness sweet I declare,
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottomed chair.

When the candles burn low, and the company 's gone,
In the silence of night as I sit here alone—
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair—
My Fanny I see in my cane-bottomed chair.

She comes from the past and revisits my room;
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair.

RONSARD TO HIS MISTRESS.

"Quand vous serez bien vieille, le soir à la chandelle
Assise auprès du feu devisant et filant,
Direz, chantant mes vers en vous esmerveillant,
Ronsard m'a célébrée du temps que j'étois belle."

Some winter night, shut snugly in
Beside the fagot in the hall,
I think I see you sit and spin,
Surrounded by your maidens all.
Old tales are told, old songs are sung,
Old days come back to memory;
You say, "When I was fair and young,
A poet sang of me!"

There 's not a maiden in your hall,
Though tired and sleepy ever so,
But wakes, as you my name recall,
And longs the history to know.
And, as the piteous tale is said,
Of lady cold and lover true,
Each, musing, carries it to bed,
And sighs and envies you!

"Our lady 's old and feeble now,"
They 'll say; "she once was fresh and fair,
And yet she spurned her lover's vow,
And heartless left him to despair:
The lover lies in silent earth,
No kindly mate the lady cheers;
She sits beside a lonely hearth,
With threescore and ten years!"

Ah! dreary thoughts and dreams are those,
But wherefore yield me to despair,
While yet the poet's bosom glows,
While yet the dame is peerless fair!
Sweet lady mine! while yet 't is time
Requite my passion and my truth,
And gather in their blushing prime
The roses of your youth!

Digitized by Google

AT THE CHURCH GATE.

ALTHOUGH I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover:
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout,
And noise and humming:
They 've hushed the Minster bell;
The organ 'gins to swell:
She 's coming, she 's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid, and stepping fast,
And hastening hither,
With modest eyes downcast:
She comes—she 's here—she 's passed—
May heaven go with her!

Kneel, undisturbed, fair Saint!
Pour out your praise or plaint
Meekly and duly;
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute
Like outcast spirits who wait
And see through heaven's gate
Angels within it.

THE AGE OF WISDOM.

Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin,
That never has known the Barber's shear,
All your wish is woman to win,
This is the way that boys begin—
Wait till you come to Forty Year.

Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;
Sighing and singing of midnight strains,
Under Bonnybell's window-panes—
Wait till you come to Forty Year.

Forty times over let Michaelmas pass,
Grizzling hair the brain doth clear—
Then you know a boy is an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
Once you have come to Forty Year.

Pledge me round, I bid ye declare,
All good fellows whose beards are gray,
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome ere
Ever a month was passed away?

The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
The brightest eyes that ever have shone,
May pray and whisper, and we not list,
Or look away, and never be missed,
Ere yet ever a month is gone.

Gillian 's dead, God rest her bier,
How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian 's married, but I sit here
Alone and merry at Forty Year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.

FAIRY DAYS.

BESIDE the old hall-fire—upon my nurse's knee,
Of happy fairy days—what tales were told to me!
I thought the world was once—all peopled with princesses,
And my heart would beat to hear—their loves and their distresses;
And many a quiet night—in slumber sweet and deep,
The pretty fairy people—would visit me in sleep.

I saw them in my dreams—come flying east and west,
With wondrous fairy gifts—the new-born babe they blessed;
One has brought a jewel—and one a crown of gold,
And one has brought a curse—but she is wrinkled and old.
The gentle queen turns pale—to hear those words of sin,
But the king he only laughs—and bids the dance begin.

The babe has grown to be—the fairest of the land,
And rides the forest green—a hawk upon her hand,
An ambling palfrey white—a golden robe and crown:
I 've seen her in my dreams—riding up and down:
And heard the ogre laugh—as she fell into his snare,
At the little tender creature—who wept and tore her hair!

But ever when it seemed—her need was at the sorest,
A prince in shining mail—comes prancing through the forest,
A waving ostrich-plume—a buckler burnished bright;
I 've seen him in my dreams—good sooth! a gallant knight.
His lips are coral-red—beneath a dark mustache;
See how he waves his hand—and how his blue eyes flash!

"Come forth, thou Paynim knight!"—he shouts in accents clear.
The giant and the maid—both tremble his voice to hear.
Saint Mary guard him well!—he draws his falchion keen,
The giant and the knight—are fighting on the green.

Digitized by Google

I see them in my dreams—his blade gives stroke on stroke,
The giant pants and reels—and tumbles like an oak!

With what a blushing grace—he falls upon his knee
And takes the lady's hand—and whispers, "You are free!"
Ah! happy childish tales—of knight and faerie!
I waken from my dreams—but there 's ne'er a knight for me!
I waken from my dreams—and wish that I could be
A child by the old hall-fire—upon my nurse's knee!

THE GARRET.

With pensive eyes the little room I view,
Where, in my youth, I weathered it so long;
With a wild mistress, a stanch friend or two,
And a light heart still breaking into song:
Making a mock of life, and all its cares,
Rich in the glory of my rising sun,
Lightly I vaulted up four pair of stairs,
In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

Yes; 't is a garret—let him know 't who will—
There was my bed—full hard it was and small;
My table there—and I decipher still
Half a lame couplet charcoaled on the wall.
Ye joys, that Time hath swept with him away,
Come to mine eyes, ye dreams of love and fun;
For you I pawned my watch how many a day,
In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

And see my little Jessy, first of all;
She comes with pouting lips and sparkling eyes:
Behold, how roguishly she pins her shawl
Across the narrow casement, curtain-wise:
Now by the bed her petticoat glides down,
And when did woman look the worse in none?
I have heard since who paid for many a gown,
In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

One jolly evening, when my friends and I
Made happy music with our songs and cheers,
A shout of triumph mounted up thus high,
And distant cannon opened on our ears:
We rise—we join in the triumphant strain—
Napoleon conquers—Austerlitz is won—
Tyrants shall never tread us down again,
In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

Let us begone—the place is sad and strange—
How far, far off, these happy times appear;
All that I have to live I 'd gladly change
For one such month as I have wasted here—
To draw long dreams of beauty, love, and power,
From founts of hope that never will outrun,
And drink all life's quintessence in an hour,
Give me the days when I was twenty-one!

WHEN MOONLIKE ORE THE HAZURE SEAS.

When moonlike ore the hazure seas
In soft effulgence swells,
When silver jews and balmy breeze
Bend down the Lily's bells;
When calm and deap, the rosy sleap
Has lapt your soal in dreems,
R Hangeline! R lady mine!
Dost thou remember Jeames?

I mark thee in the Marble All,
Where England's loveliest shine—
I say the fairest of them hall
Is Lady Hangeline.
My soul, in desolate eclipse,
With recollection teems—
And then I hask, with weeping lips,
Dost thou remember Jeames?

Away! I may not tell thee hall
This soughring heart endures—
There is a lonely sperrit-call
That Sorrow never cures;
There is a little, little Star,
That still above me beams;
It is the Star of Hope—but ar!
Dost thou remember Jeames?

KING CANUTE.

King Canute was weary-hearted; he had reigned for years a score,
Battling, struggling, pushing, fighting, killing much and robbing more;
And he thought upon his actions, walking by the wild sea-shore.

'Twixt the Chancellor and Bishop walked the King with steps sedate,
Chamberlains and grooms came after, silver-sticks and goldsticks great,
Chaplains, aides-de-camp, and pages—all the officers of state.

Sliding after like his shadow, pausing when he chose to pause,
If a frown his face contracted, straight the courtiers dropped their jaws;
If to laugh the King was minded, out they burst in loud hee-haws.

But that day a something vexed him, that was clear to old and yonng:
Thrice his Grace had yawned at table, when his favorite gleemen sung,
Once the Queen would have consoled him, but he bade her hold her tongue.

"Something ails my gracious master," cried the Keeper of the Seal.
"Sure, my lord, it is the lampreys served to dinner, or the veal?"
"Psha!" exclaimed the angry monarch. "Keeper, 't is not that I feel.

Digitized by Google

"'T is the *heart*, and not the dinner, fool, that doth my rest impair:
Can a king be great as I am, prithee, and yet know no care?
Oh, I 'm sick, and tired, and weary."—Some one cried, "The King's arm-chair!"

Then toward the lackeys turning, quick my lord the Keeper nodded,
Straight the King's great chair was brought him, by two footmen able-bodied;
Languidly he sank into it: it was comfortably wadded.

"Leading on my fierce companions," cried he, "over storm and brine,
I have fought and I have conquered! Where was glory like to mine?"
Loudly all the courtiers echoed: "Where is glory like to thine?"

"What avail me all my kingdoms? Weary am I now and old;
Those fair sons I have begotten long to see me dead and cold;
Would I were, and quiet buried, underneath the silent mould!

"Oh, remorse, the writhing serpent! at my bosom tears and bites;
Horrid, horrid things I look on, though I put out all the lights;
Ghosts of ghastly recollections troop about my bed at nights.

"Cities burning, convents blazing, red with sacrilegious fires;
Mothers weeping, virgins screaming: vainly for their slaughtered sires."—
"Such a tender conscience," cries the Bishop, "every one admires.

"But for such unpleasant bygones, cease, my gracious lord, to search.
They 're forgotten and forgiven by our Holy Mother Church;
Never, never, does she leave her benefactors in the lurch.

"Look! the land is crowned with minsters, which your Grace's bounty raised;
Abbeys filled with holy men, where you and Heaven are daily praised:
You, my lord, to think of dying? on my conscience, I 'm amazed!"

"Nay, I feel," replied King Canute, "that my end is drawing near."
"Don't say so," exclaimed the courtiers (striving each to squeeze a tear).
"Sure your Grace is strong and lusty, and may live this fifty year."

"Live these fifty years!" the Bishop roared, with actions made to suit.
"Are you mad, my good Lord Keeper, thus to speak of King Canute!
Men have lived a thousand years, and sure his Majesty will do 't.

"Adam, Enoch, Lamech, Cainan, Mahaleel, Methusela,
Lived nine hundred years apiece, and may n't the King as well as they?"
"Fervently," exclaimed the Keeper—"fervently I trust he may."

"*He* to die?" resumed the Bishop. "He a mortal like to *us?*
Death was not for him intended, though *communis omnibus:*
Keeper, you are irreligious, for to talk and cavil thus

"With his wondrous skill in healing ne'er a doctor can compete,
Loathsome lepers, if he touch them, start up clean upon their feet;
Surely he could raise the dead up, did his Highness think it meet.

"Did not once the Jewish captain stay the sun upon the hill,
And, the while he slew the foemen, bid the silver moon stand still?
So, no doubt, could gracious Canute, if it were his sacred will."

"Might I stay the sun above us, good Sir Bishop?" Canute cried;
"Could I bid the silver moon to pause upon her heavenly ride?
If the moon obeys my orders, sure I can command the tide.

"Will the advancing waves obey me, Bishop, if I make the sign?"
Said the Bishop, bowing lowly, "Land and sea, my lord, are thine."
Canute turned toward the ocean—"Back!" he said, "thou foaming brine.

"From the sacred shore I stand on, I command thee to retreat;
Venture not, thou stormy rebel, to approach thy master's seat:
Ocean, be thou still! I bid thee come not nearer to my feet!"

But the sullen ocean answered with a louder, deeper roar,
And the rapid waves drew nearer, falling sounding on the shore;
Back the Keeper and the Bishop, back the King and courtiers bore.

And he sternly bade them never more to kneel to human clay,
But alone to praise and worship that which earth and seas obey:
And his golden crown of empire never wore he from that day.
King Canute is dead and gone: Parasites exist alway.

Digitized by Google

MR. MOLONY'S ACCOUNT OF THE BALL.

GIVEN TO THE NEPAULESE AMBASSADOR BY THE PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL COMPANY.

O WILL ye choose to hear the news,
  Bedad I cannot pass it o'er:
I'll tell you all about the ball
  To the Naypaulase Ambassador.
Begor! this fête all balls does bate
  At which I've worn a pump, and I
Must here relate the splendthor great
  Of th' Oriental Company.

These men of sinse dispoised expinse,
  To fête these black Achilleses.
"We'll show the blacks," says they, "Almacks
  "And take the rooms at Willis's."
With flags and shawls, for these Nepauls,
  They hung the rooms of Willis up,
And decked the walls, and stairs, and halls,
  With roses and with lilies up.

And Jullien's band it tuck its stand,
  So sweetly in the middle there,
And soft bassoons played heavenly chunes,
  And violins did fiddle there.
And when the Coort was tired of spoort,
  I'd lave you, boys, to think there was
A nate buffet before them set,
  Where lashins of good dhrink there was

At ten before the ballroom door,
  His moighty Excellency was;
He smoiled and bowed to all the crowd,
  So gorgeous and immense he was,
His dusky shuit, sublime and mute,
  Into the doorway followed him;
And O the noise of the blackguard boys,
  As they hurrood and hollowed him!

The noble Chair * stud at the stair,
  And bade the dthrums to thump; and he
Did thus evince, to that Black Prince,
  The welcome of his Company.
O fair the girls, and rich the curls,
  And bright the oys you saw there, was;
And fixed each oye, ye there could spoi,
  On Gineral Jung Bahawther, was!

This Gineral great then tuck his sate,
  With all the other ginerals,
(Bedad his troat, his belt, his coat,
  All bleezed with precious minerals;)
And as he there, with princely air,
  Recloinin' on his cushion was,
All round about his royal chair
  The squeezin' and the pushin' was.

O Pat, such girls, such Jukes, and Earls,
  Such fashion and nobilitee!
Just think of Tim, and fancy him
  Amidst the hoigh gentilitee!
There was Lord De L'Huys, and the Portygeese
  Ministher and his lady there,
And I reckonised, with much surprise,
  Our messmate, Bob O'Grady, there;

There was Baroness Brunow, that looked like
  Juno,
  And Baroness Rehausen there,
And Countess Roullier, that looked peculiar
  Well, in her robes of gauze in there.
There was Lord Crowhurst (I knew him first,
  When only Mr. Pips he was),
And Mick O'Toole, the great big fool,
  That after supper tipsy was.

There was Lord Fingall, and his ladies all,
  And Lords Killeen and Dufferin,
And Paddy Fife, with his fat wife;
  I wondther how he could stuff her in.
There was Lord Belfast, that by me past,
  And seemed to ask how should *I* go there?
And the Widow Macrae, and Lord A. Hay,
  Aud the Marchioness of Sligo there.

Yes, Jukes, and Earls, and diamonds and pearls,
  And pretty girls, was spoorting there;
And some beside (the rogues!) I spied,
  Behind the windies, coorting there.
O, there 's one I know, bedad, would show
  As beautiful as any there,
And I'd like to hear the pipers blow,
  And shake a fut with Fanny there

* James Matheson, Esq., to whom, and the Board of Directors of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, I, Timotheus Molony, late stoker on board the "Iberia," the "Lady Mary Wood," the "Tagus," and the Oriental steamships, humbly dedicate this production of my grateful muse.

THE BALLADS OF POLICEMAN X.

THE WOFLE NEW BALLAD OF JANE RONEY AND MARY BROWN.

AN igstrawnary tail I vill tell you this veek—
I stood in the Court of A'Beckett the Beak,
Vere Mrs. Jane Roney, a vidow, I see,
Who charged Mary Brown with a robbin of she.

This Mary was pore and in misery once,
And she came to Mrs. Roney it 's more than
  twelve monce.
She ad n't got no bed, nor no dinner nor no tea,
And kind Mrs. Roney gave Mary all three.

Mrs. Roney kep Mary for ever so many veeks
(Her conduct disgusted the best of all Beax),
She kep her for nothink, as kind as could be,
Never thinkin that this Mary was a traitor to she.

"Mrs. Roney, O Mrs. Roney, I feel very ill;
Will you just step to the Doctor's for to fetch
  me a pill?"
"That I will, my pore Mary," Mrs. Roney says
  she;
And she goes off to the Doctor's as quickly as
  may be.

No sooner on this message Mrs. Roney was sped,
Than hup gits vicked Mary, and jumps out a bed.

Digitized by Google

She hopens all the trunks without never a key—
She bustes all the boxes, and vith them makes free.

Mrs. Roney's best linning, gownds, petticoats, and close,
Her children's little coats and things, her boots, and her hose,
She packed them, and she stole 'em, and avay vith them did flee.
Mrs. Roney's situation—you may think vat it vould be!

Of Mary, ungrateful, who had served her this way,
Mrs. Roney heard nothink for a long year and a day.
Till last Thursday, in Lambeth, ven whom should she see
But this Mary, as had acted so ungrateful to she?

She was leaning on the helbo of a worthy young man,
They were going to be married, and were walkin' hand in hand;
And the church-bells was a ringing for Mary and he,
And the parson was ready, and a waitin for his fee.

When up comes Mrs. Roney, and faces Mary Brown,
Who trembles, and castes her eyes upon the ground.
She calls a jolly pleaseman, it happens to be me;
"I charge this young woman, Mr. Pleaseman," says she.

"Mrs. Roney, o, Mrs. Roney, o, do let me go,
I acted most ungrateful, I own, and I know,
But the marriage-bell is a ringin, and the ring you may see,
And this young man is a waitin," says Mary says she.

"I don't care three fardens for the parson and clark,
And the bell may keep ringin from noonday to dark.
Mary Brown, Mary Brown, you must come along with me;
And I think this young man is lucky to be free."

So, in spite of the tears which bejew'd Mary's cheek,
I took that young gurl to A'Beckett the Beak;
That exlent Justice demanded her plea—
But never a sullable said Mary said she.

On account of her conduck so base and so vile,
That wicked young gurl is committed for trile,
And if she 's transpawted beyond the salt sea,
It 's a proper reward for such willians as she.

Now you young gurls of Southwark for Mary who veep,
Fróm pickin and stealin your ands you must keep,
Or it may be my dooty, as it was Thursday vèek,
To pull you all hup to A'Beckett the Beak.

THE THREE CHRISTMAS WAITS.

My name is Pleaceman X;
Last night I was in bed,
A dream did me perplex,
Which came into my Edd.
I dreamed I sor three Waits
A playing of their tune,
At Pimlico Palace gates,
All underneath the moon.
One puffed a hold French horn,
And one a hold Banjo,
And one chap seedy and torn
A Hirish pipe did blow.
They sadly piped and played,
Dexcribing of their fates;
And this was what they said,
Those three pore Christmas Waits:

"When this black year began,
This Eighteen-forty-eight,
I was a great great man,
And king both vise and great,
And Munseer Guizot by me did show
As Minister of State.

"But Febuwerry came,
And brought a rabble rout,
And me and my good dame
And children did turn out,
And us, in spite of all our right,
Sent to the right about.

"I left my native ground,
I left my kin and kith,
I left my royal crownd,
Vich I could n't travel vith,
And without a pound came to English ground,
In the name of Mr. Smith.

"Like any anchorite
I 've lived since I came here,
I 've kep myself quite quite,
I 've drank the small small beer,
And the vater, you see, disagrees vith me
And all my family dear.

"O Tweeleries so dear,
O darling Pally Royl,
Vas it to finish here
That I did trouble and toyl?
That all my plans should break in my ands,
And should on me recoil?

"My state I fenced about
Vith baynicks and vith guns;
My gals I portioned hout,
Rich vives I got my sons;
O var n't it crule to lose my rule,
My money and lands at once?

"And so, vith arp and woice,
Both troubled and shagreened,
I bid you to rejoice,
O glorious England's Queend!
And never have to veep, like pore Louis-Phileep,
Because you out are cleaned.

Digitized by Google

"Prins, so brave and stout,
I stand before your gate;
Pray send a trifle hout
To me your pore old Vait;
For nothink could be vuss than it 's been along
In this year 'Forty-eight." [vith us

"Ven this bad year began,"
The nex man said, says ee,
"I vas a Journeyman,
A taylor black and free,
And my wife went out and chaired about,
And my name 's the bold Cuffee.

"The Queen and Halbert both
I swore I would confound,
I took a hawfle hoath
To drag them to the ground;
And sevral more with me they swore
Aginst the British Crownd.

"Aginst her Pleacemen all
We said we 'd try our strenth;
Her scarlick soldiers tall
We vowed we 'd lay full lenth:
And out we came, in Freedom's name,
Last Aypril was the tenth.

"Three undred thousand snobs
Came out to stop the vay,
Vith sticks vith iron knobs,
Or else we 'd gained the day.
The harmy quite kept out of sight,
And so ve vent avay.

"Next day the Pleacemen came—
Rewenge it was their plann—
And from my good old dame
They took her taylor-mann:
And the hard hard beak did me bespeak
To Newgit in the Wann.

"In that etrocious Cort
The Jewry did agree;
The Judge did me transport,
To go beyond the sea:
And so for life, from his dear wife
They took poor old Cuffee.

"O Halbert, Appy Prince!
With children round your knees,
Ingraving ansum Prints,
And taking hoff your hease;
Oh think of me, the old Cuffee,
Beyond the solt solt seas!

"Although I 'm hold and black,
My hanguish is most great;
Great Prince, oh call me back,
And I vill be your Vait!
And never no more vill break the Lor,
As I did in 'Forty-eight."

The tailer thus did close
(A pore old blackymore rogue),
When a dismal gent uprose,
And spoke with Hirish brogue:
"I 'm Smith O'Brine, of Royal Line,
Descended from Rory Ogue.

"When great O'Connle died,
That man whom all did trust,
That man whom Henglish pride
Beheld with such disgust,
Then Erin free fixed eyes on me,
And swoar I should be fust.

"'The glorious Hirish Crown,'
Says she, 'it shall be thine:
Long time, it 's wery well known,
You kep it in your line;
That diadem of hemerald gem
Is yours, my Smith O'Brine.

"'Too long the Saxon churl
Our land encumbered hath;
Arise my Prince, my Earl,
And brush them from thy path:
Rise, mighty Smith, and sveep 'em vith
The besom of your wrath.'

"Then in my might I rose,
My country I surveyed,
I saw it filled with foes,
I viewed them undismayed;
'Ha, ha!' says I, 'the harvest 's high,
I 'll reap it with my blade.'

"My warriors I enrolled,
They rallied round their lord;
And cheafs in council old
I summoned to the board—
Wise Doheny and Duffy bold,
And Meagher of the Sword.

"I stood on Slievenamaun,
They came with pikes and bills;
They gathered in the dawn,
Like mist upon the hills,
And rushed adown the mountain-side
Like twenty thousand rills.

"Their fortress we assail:
Hurroo! my boys, hurroo!
The bloody Saxons quail
To hear the wild shaloo:
Strike, and prevail, proud Innesfail,
O'Brine aboo, aboo!

"Our people they defied;
They shot at 'em like savages,
Their bloody guns they plied
With sanguinary ravages:
Hide, blushing Glory, hide
That day among the cabbages!

"And so no more I 'll say,
But ask your Mussy great,
And humbly sing and pray,
Your Majesty's poor Wait:
Your Smith O'Brine in 'Forty-nine
Will blush for 'Forty-eight."

Digitized by Google

LITTLE BILLEE.

AIR—"*Il y avait un petit navire.*"

THERE were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.
Now when they got as far as the equator
They 'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,
"We 've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"With one another we should n't agree!
There 's little Bill, he 's young and tender,
We 're old and tough, so let 's eat he.

"Oh! Billy, we 're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the button of your chemie."
When Bill received this information
He used his pocket handkerchee.

"First let me say my catechism,
Which my poor mammy taught to me."
"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jimmy,
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top gallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee.
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment
When up he jumps. "There 's land I see:

"Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee:
There 's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K. C. B."

So when they got aboard of the Admiral's
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;
But as for little Bill he made him
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

How spake of old the Royal Seer?
(His text is one I love to treat on).
This life of ours he said is sheer
Mataiotes Mataioteton.

O Student of this gilded Book,
Declare, while musing on its pages,
If truer words were ever spoke
By ancient, or by modern sages?

The various authors' names but note,*
French, Spanish, English, Russians, Germans:
And in the volume polyglot,
Sure you may read a hundred sermons!

What histories of life are here,
More wild than all romancers' stories;
What wondrous transformations queer,
What homilies on human glories!

What theme for sorrow or for scorn!
What chronicle of Fate's surprises—
Of adverse fortune nobly borne,
Of chances, changes, ruins, rises!

Of thrones upset, and sceptres broke,
How strange a record here is written!
Of honors, dealt as if in joke;
Of brave desert unkindly smitten.

How low men were, and how they rise!
How high they were, and how they tumble!
O vanity of vanities!
O laughable, pathetic jumble!

Here between honest Janin's joke
And his Turk Excellency's firman,
I write my name upon the book:
I write my name—and end my sermon.

O Vanity of vanities!
How wayward the decrees of Fate are!
How very weak the very wise,
How very small the very great are!

What mean these stale moralities,
Sir Preacher, from your desk you mumble?
Why rail against the great and wise,
And tire us with your ceaseless grumble?

Pray choose us out another text,
O man morose and narrow-minded!
Come turn the page—I read the next,
And then the next, and still I find it.

Read here how wealth aside was thrust,
And folly set in place exalted;
How Princes footed in the dust,
While lackeys in the saddle vaulted.

Though thrice a thousand years are passed,
Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
The weary King Ecclesiast,
Upon his awful tablets penned it—

Methinks the text is never stale,
And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old old tale
Of Folly, Fortune, Glory, Ruin.

Hark to the Preacher, preaching still!
He lifts his voice and cries his sermon,
Here at St. Peter's of Cornhill,
As yonder on the Mount of Hermon;

* Between a page by Jules Janin, and a poem by the Turkish Ambassador, in Madame de R——'s album, containing the autographs of kings, princes, poets, marshals, musicians, diplomatists, statesmen, artists, and men of letters of all nations.

Digitized by Google

For you and me to heart to take
(O dear beloved brother readers)
To-day as when the good King spake
Beneath the solemn Syrian cedars.

THE END OF THE PLAY.

The play is done; the curtain drops,
Slow falling to the prompter's bell:
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around, to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task;
And, when he 's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
A face that 's any thing but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends,
Let 's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas-time.*
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That Fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good-night! with honest gentle hearts
A kindly greeting go alway!

Good-night!—I 'd say, the griefs, the joys,
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
Are but repeated in our age.
I 'd say, your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I 'd say, we suffer and we strive,
Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
As erst at twelve in corduroys.
And if, in time of sacred youth,
We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray Heaven that early Love and Truth
May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
I 'd say, how fate may change and shift;
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
The race not always to the swift.
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down.

Who knows the inscrutable design?
Blessed be He who took and gave!
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
Be weeping at her darling's grave?
We bow to Heaven that willed it so,
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That 's free to give, or to recall.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit:
Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we 'll kneel,
Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfilled.
Amen! whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize.
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young!
(Bear kindly with my humble lays);
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days:
The shepherds heard it overhead—
The joyful angels raised it then:
Glory to Heaven on high, it said,
And peace on earth to gentle men.

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
As fits the Holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still—
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

TO MARY.

I seem, in the midst of the crowd,
The lightest of all;
My laughter rings cheery and loud,
In banquet and ball.
My lip hath its smiles and its sneers,
For all men to see;
But my soul, and my truth, and my tears,
Are for thee, are for thee!

Around me they flatter and fawn—
The young and the old,
The fairest are ready to pawn
Their hearts for my gold.
They sue me—I laugh as I spurn
The slaves at my knee;
But in faith and in fondness I turn
Unto thee, unto thee!

* These verses were printed at the end of a Christmas-Book (1848-49), "Dr. Birch and his Young Friends."

Digitized by Google

ROBERT BROWNING.

ROBERT BROWNING was born in Camberwell, a suburb of London, in 1812. He was educated at London University, and in 1832 went to Italy, where he spent several years in study, devoting himself especially to mediæval history. But while he explored the dusty recesses of old libraries, he also became familiar with the life of the Italians of to-day.

In 1835 he published "Paracelsus," a dramatic poem, which did not attract popular attention. In 1837 his tragedy of "Strafford" was brought out in London, with Macready as the principal character, but was hardly successful. In 1840 he published "Sordello," a long poem in rhymed heroics, which few have read and none can understand. Between 1842 and 1846 he published a series of dramatic and lyric poems, under the general title of "Bells and Pomegranates." It contained the first poems he had written which were at all adapted to popular comprehension, and included "The Blot in the 'Scutcheon," a powerful tragedy. This play was brought out at Drury Lane in 1843, but without much success.

In 1846 Mr. Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, and they went immediately to Italy, where they soon settled at Florence. The story of their courtship and of their life in Florence is told in the sketch of Mrs. Browning, at page 221.

In 1849 a collected edition of Mr. Browning's poems was published in London and in Boston, Mass., and from that date they have had a much greater number of readers, though, with the exception of a few pieces like "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" and "How they brought the Good News," they have never been widely popular. In 1850 he published "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," and in 1855 "Men and Women," the finest of his collected volumes of short poems. "The Ring and the Book," published in 1871, is the longest poem in the English language. It is a bloody story from Florentine history, told over and over again, each time being seen through different eyes and presenting a new phase. In the same year he published "Balaustion's Adventure" and "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau," in 1872 "Fifine at the Fair," in 1873 "The Red Cotton Nightcap Country," in 1875 "Aristophanes' Apology," and in 1876 "The Inn Album."

After the death of his wife in 1861, Mr. Browning returned with their son to London, where he has since resided.

It is impossible to say where the verdict of the future will place Browning among our poets; but it seems likely that he will be more reverenced than read, and more stolen from than quoted.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch as the gate-bolts undrew,
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through.
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace—
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the check-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'T was a moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld 't was morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime—
So Joris broke silence with "Yet there is time!"

At Aerschot up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past;
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray;

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;

Digitized by Google

And one eye's black intelligence—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance;
And the thick heavy spume-flakes, which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upward in galloping on.

By Hasselt Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her;
We 'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck, and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh;
'Neath our feet broke the brittle, bright stubble like chaff:
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they 'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer—
Clapped my hands, laughed and sung, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is friends flocking round,
As I sate with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

EVELYN HOPE.

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die, too, in the glass.
Little has yet been changed, I think;
The shutters are shut—no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name—
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares;
And now was quiet, now astir—
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late, then, Evelyn Hope?
What! your soul was pure and true;
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew;
And just because I was thrice as old,
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow-mortals—naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love;
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed, it may be, for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few;
Much is to learn, and much to forget,
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come—at last it will—
When Evelyn Hope, what meant, I shall say,
In the lower earth—in the years long still—
That body and soul so gay?
Why your hair was amber I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived, I shall say, so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing—one—in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me—
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you Evelyn, all the while;
My heart seemed full as it could hold—
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush! I will give you this leaf to keep;
See, I shut it inside the sweet, cold hand.
There, that is our secret! go to sleep;
You will wake, and remember, and understand

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.

That 's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive; I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

Digitized by Google

Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat;" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . how shall I say? . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the west,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good; but thanked
Somehow . . I know not how . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine hundred years old name
With anybody's gift. Who 'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such a one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; put who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We 'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we 'll go
Together down, sir! Notice Neptune though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

COUNT GISMOND.

AIX IN PROVENCE.

CHRIST God, who savest men, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honor, 't was with all his strength.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in Queen's array
To give our Tourney prize away.

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 't was all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast;
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

But no: they let me laugh and sing
My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

And come out on the morning troop
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me Queen and made me stoop
Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My Queen's day—oh, I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 't was time I should present
The victor's crown, but . . there 't will last
No long time . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

See! Gismond 's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys: I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth boldly (to my face indeed)
But Gauthier, and he thundered "Stay!"
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!"

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet
About her! Let her shun the chaste,
Or lay herself before their feet!
Shall she, whose body I embraced
A night long, queen it in the day?
For Honor's sake, no crowns, I say!"

I? What I answered? As I live
I never fancied such a thing
As answer possible to give.
What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul.

Digitized by Google

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
  That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,
  I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan; who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
  Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote
  In blood men's verdict there. North, south,
East, west, I looked. The lie was dead
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
  The heart of the joy with my content
In watching Gismond unalloyed
  By any doubt of the event:
God took that on him—I was bid
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

Did I not watch him while he let
  His armorer just brace his greaves,
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
  The while! His foot . . my memory leaves
No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
  Was finished, prone lay the false Knight,
Prone as his lie upon the ground:
  Gismond flew at him, used no sleight
Of the sword, but open-breasted drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
  And said, "Here die, but end thy breath,
In full confession, lest thou fleet
  From my first to God's second death!
Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have lied
To God and her," he said, and died.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
  —What safe my heart holds, though no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
  My powers forever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

Over my head his arm he flung
  Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword, that dripped by me and swung
  A little shifted in its belt—
For he began to say the while
How south our home lay many a mile.

So 'mid the shouting multitude
  We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
  Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

Our elder boy has got the clear
  Great brow; though when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . Gismond here?
  And have you brought my tercel back?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May.

THE LOST LEADER.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
  Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
  Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
  So much was theirs who so little allowed;
How all our copper had gone for his service!
  Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
  Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
  Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
  Burns, Shelley, were with us—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
  He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering—not through his presence;
  Songs may inspirit us—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,
  Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then—record one lost soul more,
  One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more triumph for devils, and sorrow for angels,
  One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins; let him never come back to us!
  There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
  Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
  Aim at our heart ere we pierce through his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
  Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

THE CONFESSIONAL.

[SPAIN.]

It is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . all they fear or hope
Are lies, and lies—there! through my door
And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
There, lies, they lie, shall still be hurled,
Till spite of them I reach the world!

You think Priests just and holy men!
Before they put me in this den,

Digitized by Google

I was a human creature too,
With flesh and blood like one of you,
A girl that laughed in beauty's pride
Like lilies in your world outside.

I had a lover—shame avaunt!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint: one night they kissed
My soul out in the burning mist.

So, next day when the accustomed train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said—and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go,
And pass to the confession-chair
And tell the old mild father there.

But when I falter Beltran's name,
"Ha?" quoth the father; "much I blame
The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve?
Despair not—strenuously retrieve!
Nay, I will turn this love of thine
To lawful love, almost divine.

"For he is young, and led astray,
This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state;
So, thine shall be an angel's fate,
Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll
Its cloud away and save his soul.

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
Thou mayst demand and be possessed
Of all his plans, and next day steal
To me, and all those plans reveal,
That I and every priest, to purge
His soul, may fast and use the scourge."

That father's beard was long and white,
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

He told me what he would not tell
For hope of heaven or fear of hell;
And I lay listening in such pride,
And, soon as he had left my side,
Tripped to the church by morning-light
To save his soul in his despite.

I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
"And now make haste," I said, "to pray
The one spot from his soul away:
To-night he comes, but not the same
Will look!" At night he never came.

Nor next night: on the after-morn,
I went forth with a strength new-born:
The church was empty; something drew
My steps into the street: I knew
It led me to the market-place—
Where, lo, on high—the father's face!

That horrible black scaffold drest—
The stapled block .. God sink the rest!
That head strapped back, that blinding vest,
Those knotted hands and naked breast—
Till near one busy hangman pressed—
And—on the neck these arms caressed. . .

No part in aught they hope or fear!
No heaven with them, no hell—and here,
No earth, not so much space as pens
My body in their worst of dens
But shall bear God and man my cry—
Lies—lies, again—and still, they lie!

THE GLOVE.

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*.)

"HEIGHO," yawned one day King Francis,
"Distance all value enhances!
When a man 's busy, why, leisure
Strikes him as wonderful pleasure—
'Faith, and at leisure once is he?
Straightway he wants to be busy.
Here we 've got peace; and aghast I 'm
Caught thinking war the true pastime!
Is there a reason in metre?
Give us your speech, Master Peter!"
I who, if mortal dare say so,
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,
"Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets:
Men are the merest Ixions"—
Here the King whistled aloud, "Let 's
. . Heigho . . go look at our lions!"
Such are the sorrowful chances
If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the court-yard proceeding,
Our company, Francis was leading,
Increased by new followers tenfold
Before he arrived at the penfold;
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen
At sunset the western horizon.
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost
With the dame he professed to adore most—
Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed
Her, and the horrible pitside;
For the penfold surrounded a hollow
Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,
And shelved to the chamber secluded
Where Bluebeard, the great lion brooded.
The King hailed his keeper, an Arab
As glossy and black as a scarab,
And bade him make sport and at once stir
Up and out of his den the old monster.
They opened a hole in the wire-work
Across it, and dropped there a firework,
And fled; one's heart's beating redoubled;
A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,
The blackness and silence so utter,
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter,
Then earth in a sudden contortion
Gave out to our gaze her abortion!
Such a brute! Were I friend Clement Marot
(Whose experience of Nature 's but narrow,
And whose faculties move in no small mist
When he versifies David the Psalmist)
I should study that brute to describe you
Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu!

Digitized by Google

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy
To see the black mane, vast and heapy,
The tail in the air stiff and straining,
The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,
As over the barrier which bounded
His platform, and us who surrounded
The barrier, they reached and they rested
On the space that might stand him in best stead;
For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,
The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,
And if, in this minute of wonder,
No outlet 'mid lightning and thunder,
Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,
The lion at last was delivered?
Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead!
And you saw by the flash on his forehead,
By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,
He was leagues in the desert already,
Driving the flocks up the mountain,
Or catlike couched hard by the fountain
To waylay the date-gathering negress:
So guarded he entrance or egress.
"How he stands!" quoth the King; "we may well swear,
No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere,
And so can afford the confession,
We exercise wholesome discretion
In keeping aloof from his threshold;
Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,
Their first would too pleasantly purloin
The visitor's brisket or surloin:
But who's he would prove so foolhardy?
Not the best man of Marignam, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,
Fell close to the lion, and rested:
The dame 't was, who flung it and jested
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sate there pursuing
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight 's a tarrier!
De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,
Walked straight to the glove—while the lion
Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on
The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,
And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir—
Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,
Leaped back where the lady was seated,
And full in the face of its owner
Flung the glove—

"Your heart's queen, you dethrone her?
So should I"—cried the King—"'t was mere vanity,
Not love, set that task to humanity!"
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing
From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so I; for I caught an expression
In her brow's undisturbed self-possession
Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment—
As if from no pleasing experiment
She rose, yet of pain not much heedful
So long as the process was needful—
As if she had tried in a crucible,
To what "speeches like gold" were reducible,
And, finding the finest prove copper,
Felt the smoke in her face was but proper;
To know what she had *not* to trust to,
Was worth all the ashes, and dust too.
She went out 'mid hooting and laughter;
Clement Marot stayed; I followed after,
And asked, as a grace, what it all meant—
If she wished not the rash deed's recallment?
"For I"—so I spoke—"am a poet:
Human nature behooves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard
Of the deed proved alone by the word:
For my love—what De Lorge would not dare!
With my scorn—what De Lorge could compare!
And the endless descriptions of death
He would brave when my lip formed a breath,
I must reckon as braved, or, of course,
Doubt his word—and moreover, perforce,
For such gifts as no lady could spurn,
Must offer my love in return.
When I looked on your lion, it brought
All the dangers at once to my thought,
Encountered by all sorts of men,
Before he was lodged in his den—
From the poor slave whose club or bare hands
Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,
With no King and no Court to applaud,
By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,
Yet to capture the creature made shift,
That his rude boys might laugh at the gift,
To the page who last leaped o'er the fence
Of the pit, on no greater pretence
Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,
Lest his pay for a week should be stopped—
So, wiser I judged it to make
One trial what 'death for my sake'
Really meant, while the power was yet mine,
Than to wait until time should define
Such a phrase not so simply as I,
Who took it to mean just 'to die.'
The blow a glove gives is but weak—
Does the mark yet discolor my cheek?
But when the heart suffers a blow,
Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,
And saw a youth eagerly keeping
As close as he dared to the doorway:
No doubt that a noble should more weigh
His life than befits a plebeian;
And yet, had our brute been Nemean—
(I judge by a certain calm fervor
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her)
—He 'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn
If you whispered, "Friend, what you 'd get, first earn!"
And when, shortly after, she carried
Her shame from the Court, and they married,
To that marriage some happiness, maugre
The voice of the court I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,
Those in wonder and praise, these in envy;
And in short stood so plain a head taller
That he wooed and won . . How do you call her?
The beauty, that rose in the sequel
To the King's love, who loved her a week well;

Digitized by Google

And 't was noticed he never would honor
De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)
With the easy commission of stretching
His legs in the service, and fetching
His wife, from her chamber, those straying
Sad gloves she was always mislaying,
While the King took the closet to chat in—
But of course this adventure came pat in;
And never the King told the story,
How bringing a glove brought such glory,
But the wife smiled—"His nerves are grown firmer—
Mine he brings now and utters no murmur!"

Venienti occurrite morbo!
With which moral I drop my theorbo.

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND.

My love, this is the bitterest, that thou
Who art all truth and who dost love me now
As thine eyes say, as thy voice breaks to say—
Shouldst love so truly and couldst love me still
A whole long life through, had but love its will,
Would death that leads me from thee brook delay!

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand
Would never let mine go, thy heart withstand
The beating of my heart to reach its place.
When should I look for thee and feel thee gone?
When cry for the old comfort and find none?
Never, I know! Thy soul is in thy face.

Oh, I should fade—'t is willed so! might I save,
Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave
Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.
It is not to be granted. But the soul
Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that whole;
Vainly the flesh fades—soul makes all things new.

And 't would not be because my eye grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him
Who never is dishonored in the spark
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it sprang nor be afraid
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect, white and clean
Outside as inside, soul and soul's demesne
Alike, this body given to show it by!
Oh, three-parts through the worst of life's abyss,
What plaudits from the next world after this,
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and gain the sky!

And is it not the bitterer to think
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink
Although thy love was love in very deed?
I know that nature! Pass a festive day
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away
Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie where it fell;
If old things remain old things all is well,
For thou art grateful as becomes man best:
And hadst thou only heard me play one tune,
Or viewed me from a window, not so soon
With thee would such things fade as with the rest.

I seem to see! we meet and part: 't is brief:
The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,
The very chair I sat on breaks the rank;
That is a portrait of me on the wall—
Three lines, my face comes at so slight a call;
And for all this, one little hour 's to thank.

But now, because the hour through years was fixed,
Because our inmost beings met and mixed,
Because thou once hast loved me—wilt thou dare
Say to thy soul and who may list beside,
"Therefore she is immortally my bride,
Chance cannot change that love, nor time impair.

"So, what if in the dusk of life that 's left,
I, a tired traveller, of my sun bereft,
Look from my path, when, mimicking the same,
The fire-fly glimpses past me, come and gone?
—Where was it till the sunset? where anon
It will be at the sunrise! what 's to blame?"

Is it so helpful to thee? canst thou take
The mimic up, nor, for the true thing's sake,
Put gently by such efforts at a beam?
Is the remainder of the way so long
Thou need'st the little solace, thou the strong?
Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and dream!

"—Ah, but the fresher faces! Is it true,"
Thou 'lt ask, "some eyes are beautiful and new?
Some hair—how can one choose but grasp such wealth?
And if a man would press his lips to lips
Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose cup there slips
The dew-drop out of, must it be by stealth?

"It cannot change the love kept still for her,
Much more than, such a picture to prefer
Passing a day with, to a room's bare side.
The painted form takes nothing she possessed,
Yet while the Titian's Venus lies at rest
A man looks. Once more, what is there to chide?"

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,
My own self sell myself, my hand attach
Its warrant to the very thefts from me—
Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,
Thy man's truth I was bold to bid God see!

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all thou canst
Away to the new faces—disentranced—
(Say it and think it) obdurate no more,
Reissue looks and words from the old mint—
Pass them afresh, no matter whose the print,
Image, and superscription, once they bore!

Digitized by Google

Recoin thyself and give it them to spend—
It all comes to the same thing at the end,
Since mine thou wast, mine art, and mine shalt be,
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come
Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!

Only, why should it be with stain at all?
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of coronal,
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why need the other women know so much
And talk together, "Such the look and such
The smile he used to love with, then as now!"

Might I die last and show thee! Should I find
Such hardship in the few years left behind,
If free to take and light my lamp, and go
Into thy tomb, and shut the door and sit
Seeing thy face on those four sides of it
The better that they are so blank, I know!

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn o'er
Within my mind each look, get more and more
By heart each word, too much to learn at first,
And join thee all the fitter for the pause
'Neath the low doorway's lintel. That were cause
For lingering, though thou calledst, if I durst!

And yet thou art the nobler of us two.
What dare I dream of, that thou canst not do,
Outstripping my ten small steps with one stride?
I'll say then, here's a trial and a task—
Is it to bear?—if easy, I'll not ask—
Though love fail, I can trust on in thy pride.

Pride?—when those eyes forestall the life behind
The death I have to go through!—when I find,
Now that I want thy help most, all of thee!
What did I fear? Thy love shall hold me fast
Until the little minute's sleep is past
And I wake saved.—And yet, it will not be!

A LIGHT WOMAN.

So far as our story approaches the end,
Which do you pity the most of us three?—
My friend, or the mistress of my friend
With her wanton eyes, or me?

My friend was already too good to lose,
And seemed in the way of improvement yet,
When she crossed his path with her hunting-noose
And over him drew her net.

When I saw him tangled in her toils,
A shame, said I, if she adds just him
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
The hundredth, for a whim!

And before my friend be wholly hers,
How easy to prove to him, I said,
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,
Though she snaps at the wren instead!

So I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,
My hand sought hers as in earnest need,
And round she turned for my noble sake,
And gave me herself indeed.

The eagle am I, with my fame in the world,
The wren is he, with his maiden face.
—You look away and your lip is curled?
Patience, a moment's space!

For see—my friend goes shaking and white;
He eyes me as the basilisk:
I have turned, it appears, his day to night,
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:
"Though I love her—that he comprehends—
One should master one's passions (love, in chief),
And be loyal to one's friends!"

And she—she lies in my hand as tame
As a pear hung basking over a wall;
Just a touch to try, and off it came;
'T is mine—can I let it fall?

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?
'T was quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst
When I gave its stalk a twist.

And I—what I seem to my friend, you see—
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess.
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?
No hero, I confess.

'T is an awkward thing to play with souls,
And matter enough to save one's own.
Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals
He played with for bits of stone!

One likes to show the truth for the truth;
That the woman was light is very true:
But suppose she says—never mind that youth—
What wrong have I done to you?

Well, any how, here the story stays,
So far at least as I understand;
And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST.

There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do the townsmen tell:

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the east
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride increased—

Digitized by Google

They felt by its beats her heart expand—
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

That self-same instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home to-day."

Hair in heaps laid heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure—
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure—
Which vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure.

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man—
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes—
The past was a sleep, and her life began.

As love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that self-same night
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the palace overshadows one,
Because of a crime which may God requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursèd son.)

The Duke with the statue's face in the square,
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bedchamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalque repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the east
She might watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride—
"Your window and its world suffice."
So replied the tongue, while the heart replied:

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damnèd soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)—
"My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover, the Duke rides past, I know—
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep.
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove),

And smiled "'Twas a very funeral
Your lady will think, this feast of ours—
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And let Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"Alas! my lady leaves the south.
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth.

"No way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover, Petraja is cold this spring—
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night shall bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool—
Or I am the fool, and thou art his king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool—
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France,
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

Digitized by Google

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,'
With its hope of my lady's countenance—

"For I ride—what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well betide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth—
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth
By winter's fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain worth,

And to press a point while these oppose
Were a simple policy—best wait,
And lose no friends and gain no foes.

Meanwhile, worse fates than a lover's fate
Who daily may ride and lean and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she—she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook.

When the picture was reached the book was done,
And she turned from it all night to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

Weeks grew months, years—gleam by gleam
The glory dropped from youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream,

Which hovered as dreams do, still above—
But who can take a dream for truth?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked—
And wondered who the woman was,
So hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who moulds the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle—

"To say,—'What matters at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm,
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(With, leaning out of a bright blue space,
As a ghost might from a chink of sky,
The passionate pale lady's face—

Eyeing ever with earnest eye,
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,
Some one who ever passes by—)

The Duke sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "So, my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch

Some subtle fashioner of shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall work my plan,
Mould me on horseback here aloft,
Alive—(the subtle artisan!)

"In the very square I cross so oft!
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft

"While the mouth and the brow are brave in bronze—
Admire and say, 'When he was alive,
How he would take his pleasure once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen meanwhile and laugh in my tomb
At indolence which aspires to strive."

So! while these wait the trump of doom
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Digitized by Google

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Surely they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had cut his way through the world to this.

I hear your reproach—"But delay was best,
For their end was a crime!"—Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment's view.

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, 't were an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham.
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table 's a hat, and your prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as truly, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play—is my principle!
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Was, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a crime, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join),
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

(CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER.")

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him—but to-morrow, love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly, the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, either; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require—
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less!
You smile? why, there 's my picture ready made.
There 's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers every thing—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That 's gone, you know)—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There 's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the tree safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease
And autumn grows, autumn in every thing.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange, now, looks the life he makes us lead!
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are:
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber, for example—turn your head—
All that 's behind us! you don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak;
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, love! so such things should be—
Behold madonna, I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say perfectly
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 't is easy, all of it,
No sketches first, no studies, that 's long past—
I do what many dream of all their lives
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,
Yet do much less, so much less, some one says,
(I know his name, no matter) so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia! I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed, beating, stuffed and stopped-up brain,

Digitized by Google

Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too,
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken—what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered—what of that?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? all is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect with my art—the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain—
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh,
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work, now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak! its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it.
But all the play, the insight, and the stretch—
Out of me! out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.
Nay, love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Angelo—
Rafael is waiting. Up to God all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems—
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Angelo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not—
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes: I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look—
One finger on his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
You painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless—but I know—
'Tis done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray—
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was to have ended there—then if
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that—
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Angelo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)—
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare—yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michael Angelo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost,
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

Digitized by Google

If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there 's a star;
Morello 's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love—come in at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me. Oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me! Those loans!
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work 's my ware, and what 's it worth?
I 'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michael Angelo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same cousin's freak. Beside,
What 's better and what 's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff.
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time,
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there 's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Angelo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there 's still Lucrezia—as I choose.

Again the cousin's whistle! Go, my love.

SAUL.

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he, "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer or of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child, with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second inclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid,
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all;
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof—showed Saul.

He stood as erect as that tent-prop; both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to each side:
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there—as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change the king-serpent all heavily hangs,

Digitized by Google

Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time—so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

Then I tuned my harp—took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door, till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us—so blue and so far!

—Then the tune, for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate,
Till for boldness they fight one another: and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!—
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! are balm-seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left, such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—And then, the glad chant
Of the marriage—first go the young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends?—Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned . .
But I stopped here—for here in the darkness, Saul groaned.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered—and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban at once with a start—
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head—but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang—

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! no spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing, nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock—
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree—the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water—the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal—the rich dates—yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust's-flesh steeped in the pitcher; the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bull-rushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses, forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and heard her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best . . .'
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much—but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true!
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise, and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;
And all gifts which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage, like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor, and lets the gold go:
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning it—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul!"

Digitized by Google

And lo, with that leap of my spirit, heart, hand, harp and voice, [ding rejoice
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bid-
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate—leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold—
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on its crest
For their food in the ardors of summer! One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled,
At the king's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? all to traverse 'twixt hope and despair—
Death was past, life not come—so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 't was Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intense: so, arm folded in arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

What spell or what charm,
(For, awhile there was trouble within me) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him?—Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty! Beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not—he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pastures, when round me the sheep,
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep,
And I lay in my hollow, and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least with my fancies the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for. And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus:

"Yea, my king,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree—how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindedst when these too, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect; yet more was to learn,
Ev'n the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun

Digitized by Google

Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime—so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn fill the south and the north
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past.
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last.
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! again a long draught of my soul-wine! look forth o'er the years—
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? in the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till built to the skies.
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers—whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river 's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art."

And behold while I sang . . But O Thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted, thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure—my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, Mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to my heart,
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels that night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

I say then—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose,
So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And so sat out my singing—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all times, to the man patient there,
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak-roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace; he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower,
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?

Digitized by Google

I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add to that life of the past, both the future and this.
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke:

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke!
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handiwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw.
I report, as a man may of God's work—all 's love, yet all 's law!
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dew-drop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet!
Yet with all this abounding experience, this Deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There 's one faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift. Behold! I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'er-take
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain, for love's sake!
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things, have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator, the end, what began?—
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection—succeed with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the mistake,
Saul, the failure, the ruin, he seems now—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure.
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggle in this.

"I believe it! 't is Thou, God, that givest, 't is I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All 's one gift: thou canst grant it, moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will? the mere atoms despise me! and why am I loath
To look that, even that in the face too? why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? what stops my despair?
This:—'t is not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the king—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect.—Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wilt Thou—so wilt Thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost Crown—

Digitized by Google

And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that Salvation joins issue with death!
As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most: the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'T is the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee: a man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever! a hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive —the aware—
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not.
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported—suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' new awe; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still,
Though averted in wonder and dread; and the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe.
E'en the serpent that slid away silent—he felt the new Law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar, and moved the vine-bowers.
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—E'en so! it is so.

ONE WORD MORE.

TO E. B. B.

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together.
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These, the world might view—but one the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?
You and I would rather read that volume,
(Taken to his beating bosom by it)—
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that 's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world with it, "Ours—the treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper, "Beatrice."
While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—"Certain people of importance"
(Such he gave his daily, dreadful line to)
Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those "people of importance:"
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

Digitized by Google

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?

This: no artist lives and loves that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only,
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that 's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that 's turned his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry—
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Save the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, his mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness, the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
"Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better."

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

Did he love one face from out the thousands
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave),
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;
Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing—
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!
Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time,
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows through bronze, may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumb'rous princess.
He who writes, may write for once, as I do.

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth—the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:
I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence—
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly—glad to finish.

What, there 's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay—for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('t is the old sweet mythos),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better?
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved-work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved-work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved-work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

Digitized by Google

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

This I say of me, but think of you, love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side—there's the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you.
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you,
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

RABBI BEN EZRA.

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears,
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate—folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once, "How good to live and learn?"

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, shall see Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete—I trust what Thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,

Digitized by Google

When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Be the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made;
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive:
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down, but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life

Digitized by Google

With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

So, take and use Thy work!
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

CONFESSIONS.

What is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again,
Where the physic-bottles stand
On the table's edge—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhat near its stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way, you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas!
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

MAY AND DEATH.

I wish that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.
A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sakes, be May still May!
Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between—

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that's all.

PROSPICE.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go;
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold,
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

YOUTH AND ART.

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted, and polished,

Digitized by Google

Then laughed, "They will see some day
  Smith made, and Gibson demolished."

My business was song, song, song;
  I chirped, cheeped, trilled, and twittered,
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
  And Grisi's existence embittered!"

I earned no more by a warble
  Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
  I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
  Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
  For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
  Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
  With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
  Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
  And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
  If you never turned your eyes' tail up,
As I shook upon E *in alt.*,
  Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
  And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
  With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower
  In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
  Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx,
  (And yet the memory rankles,)
When models arrived, some minx
  Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good!
  "That foreign fellow—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
  For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say,
  "Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
  Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes?"

No, no: you would not be rash,
  Nor I rasher and something over:
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
  And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
  I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,
I've married a rich old lord,
  And you're dubbed knight and an R. A.

Each life's unfulfilled, you see;
  It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
  Starved, feasted, despaired—been happy.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
  And people suppose me clever:
This could but have happened once,
  And we missed it, lost it forever.

APPARENT FAILURE.

"We shall soon lose a celebrated building."
Paris Newspaper.

No, for I'll save it! Seven years since,
  I passed through Paris, stopped a day
To see the baptism of your Prince;
  Saw, made my bow, and went my way:
Walking the heat and headache off,
  I took the Seine-side, you surmise,
Thought of the Congress, Gortschakoff,
  Cavour's appeal and Buol's replies,
So sauntered till—what met my eyes?

Only the Doric little Morgue! [drowned:
  The dead-house where you show your
Petrarch's Vaucluse makes proud the Sorgue,
  Your Morgue has made the Seine renowned.
One pays one's debt in such a case;
  I plucked up heart and entered—stalked,
Keeping a tolerable face
  Compared with some whose cheeks were chalked:
Let them! No Briton's to be balked!

First came the silent gazers; next,
  A screen of glass, we're thankful for;
Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,
  The three men who did most abhor
Their life in Paris yesterday,
  So killed themselves: and now, enthroned
Each on his copper couch, they lay
  Fronting me, waiting to be owned.
I thought, and think, their sin's atoned.

Poor men, God made, and all for that!
  The reverence struck me; o'er each head
Religiously was hung its hat,
  Each coat dripped by the owner's bed,
Sacred from touch: each had his birth,
  His bounds, his proper place of rest,
Who last night tenanted on earth
  Some arch, where twelve such slept abreast—
Unless the plain asphalte seemed best.

How did it happen, my poor boy?
  You wanted to be Buonaparte
And have the Tuileries for toy,
  And could not, so it broke your heart?
You, old one by his side, I judge,
  Were, red as blood, a socialist,
A leveller! Does the Empire grudge
  You've gained what no Republic missed?
Be quiet, and unclench your fist!

And this—why, he was red in vain,
  Or black—poor fellow—that is blue!

Digitized by Google

What fancy was it, turned your brain?
  Oh, women were the prize for you!
Money gets women, cards and dice
  Get money, and ill-luck gets just
The copper couch and one clear nice
  Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,
The right thing to extinguish lust!

It's wiser being good than bad;
  It's safer being meek than fierce:
It's fitter being sane than mad.
  My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
  That, after Last, returns the First.
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
  That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
  The river Weser, deep and wide,
  Washes its wall on the southern side;
  A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But when begins my ditty,
  Almost five hundred years ago,
  To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

  Rats!
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
  And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
  And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
  By drowning their speaking
  With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

At last the people in a body
  To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'T is clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy:
  And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

An hour they sate in counsel—
  At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell;
  I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again.
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?

"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle, green and glutinous),
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure:
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red;
And he himself was tall and thin;
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin;
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin:
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin!
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the trump of doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm—
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper—
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
  "Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats,
And, as for what your brain bewilders—
If I can rid your town of rats,
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

Into the street the Piper stepped,
  Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
  In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;

Digitized by Google

And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
  Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers;
  Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As—the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was: "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe—
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke,
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke;
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

The piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the head cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpion's no survivor—
With him I proved no bargain-driver;
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

Once more he stepped into the street;
  And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
  And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
  Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering;
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running:
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop.
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed;
And when all were in, to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.

Digitized by Google

Did I say all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after-years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And every thing was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more."

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says, that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent east, west, north, and south,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 't was a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen Hundred and Seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the Great Church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away;
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterranean prison
Into which they were trepanned,
Long time ago, in a mighty band,
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.
So, Willy, let you and me be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers;
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.

You know we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow,
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes:
"You're wounded!" "Nay," his soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, sire!" And, his chief beside,
Smiling, the boy fell dead.

MISCONCEPTIONS.

This is a spray the bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to—
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

Digitized by Google

This is a heart the queen leant on,
  Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on,
  Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
  Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on—
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!

ONE WAY OF LOVE.

All June I bound the rose in sheaves;
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves,
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string—fold music's wing.
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

My whole life long I learned to love;
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion.—Heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'T is well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they.

TIME'S REVENGES.

I've a Friend, over the sea;
I like him, but he loves me;
It all grew out of the books I write;
They find such favor in his sight
That he slaughters you with savage looks
Because you don't admire my books:
He does himself though—and if some vein
Were to snap to-night in his heavy brain,
To-morrow month, if I lived to try,
Round should I just turn quietly,
Or out of the bedclothes stretch my hand
Till I found him, come from his foreign land
To be my nurse in this poor place,
And make me broth, and wash my face,
And light my fire, and all the while
Bear with his old good-humored smile
That I told him "Better have kept away
Than come and kill me, night and day,
With worse than fever's throbs and shoots,
At the creaking of his clumsy boots."
I am as sure that this he would do,
As that St. Paul's is striking two:
And I think I had rather—woe is me!
—Yes rather see him than not see,
If lifting a hand would seat him there
Before me in the empty chair
To-night when my head aches indeed,
And I can neither think, nor read,
And these blue fingers will not hold
The pen; this garret's freezing cold!

And I've a Lady—There he wakes,
The laughing fiend and prince of snakes
Within me, at her name, to pray
Fate send some creature in the way
Of my love for her, to be down-torn,
Upthrust and onward borne,
So I might prove myself that sea
Of passion which I needs must be!
Call my thoughts false and my fancies quaint,
And my style infirm, and its figures faint,
All the critics say, and more blame yet,
And not one angry word you get!
But, please you, wonder I would put
My cheek beneath that Lady's foot
Rather than trample under mine
The laurels of the Florentine,
And you shall see how the Devil spends
A fire God gave for other ends!
I tell you, I stride up and down
This garret, crowned with love's best crown,
And feasted with love's perfect feast,
To think I kill for her, at least,
Body and soul and peace and fame,
Alike youth's end and manhood's aim,
—So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,
Filled full, eaten out and in
With the face of her, the eyes of her,
The lips and little chin, the stir
Of shadow round her mouth; and she
—I'll tell you—calmly would decree
That I should roast at a slow fire,
If that would compass her desire
And make her one whom they invite
To the famous ball to-morrow night.

There may be Heaven; there must be Hell;
Meantime, there is our Earth here—well!

MEETING AT NIGHT.

The gray sea, and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves, that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed in the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm, sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross, till a farm appears:
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts, beating each to each.

PARTING AT MORNING.

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim—
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

Digitized by Google

CHARLES MACKAY.

CHARLES MACKAY was born in Perth, Scotland, in 1812. He received his education in London and Brussels, and in 1834 joined the staff of the London "Morning Chronicle." In 1844 he became editor of the Glasgow "Argus," but in 1847 returned to London, where he established the "London Review" in 1860. He lectured in the United States in 1852, and from 1862 to 1865 was here as war correspondent of the London "Times." He has published nearly a dozen small volumes of poems, the first of which appeared in 1834. Some of his songs have been immensely popular, "The Inquiry" perhaps the most so of all. His other works are "Longbeard," a romance, published in 1840; "Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions," in 1841; "The Scenery and Poetry of the English Lakes," in 1846; "Life and Liberty in America," in 1853; and "Lost Beauties and Perishing Graces of the English Language," in 1874. He received the degree of LL. D. from the University of Glasgow in 1846.

THE INQUIRY.

TELL me, ye wingèd winds,
That round my pathway roar,
Do ye not know some spot
Where mortals weep no more?
Some lone and pleasant dell,
Some valley in the west,
Where, free from toil and pain,
The weary soul may rest?
The loud wind dwindled to a whisper low,
And sighed for pity as it answered, "No."

Tell me, thou mighty deep,
Whose billows round me play,
Know'st thou some favored spot,
Some island far away,
Where weary man may find
The bliss for which he sighs,—
Where sorrow never lives,
And friendship never dies?
The loud waves, rolling in perpetual flow,
Stopped for a while, and sighed to answer, "No."

And thou, serenest moon,
That, with such lovely face,
Dost look upon the earth,
Asleep in night's embrace;
Tell me, in all thy round
Hast thou not seen some spot
Where miserable man
May find a happier lot?
Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in woe,
And a voice, sweet but sad, responded, "No."

Tell me, my secret soul,
Oh, tell me, Hope and Faith,
Is there no resting-place
From sorrow, sin, and death?
Is there no happy spot
Where mortals may be blessed,
Where grief may find a balm,
And weariness a rest?
Faith, Hope, and Love, best boons to mortals given,
Waved their bright wings, and whispered,—
"Yes, in heaven!"

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

WHAT might be done if men were wise—
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother,
Would they unite
In love and right,
And cease their scorn of one another?

Oppression's heart might be imbued
With kindling drops of loving-kindness;
And knowledge pour,
From shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.

All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrongs,
All vice and crime, might die together;
And wine and corn,
To each man born,
Be free as warmth in summer weather.

The meanest wretch that ever trod,
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,
Might stand erect
In self-respect,
And share the teeming world to-morrow.

What might be done? This might be done,
And more than this, my suffering brother—
More than the tongue
E'er said or sung,
If men were wise and loved each other.

Digitized by Google

LOUISE ON THE DOOR-STEP.

HALF-PAST three in the morning!
And no one in the street
But me, on the sheltering door-step
Resting my weary feet:
Watching the rain-drops patter
And dance where the puddles run,
As bright in the flaring gaslight
As dewdrops in the sun.

There 's a light upon the pavement—
It shines like a magic glass,
And there are faces in it
That look at me and pass.
Faces! ah! well remembered
In the happy Long Ago,
When my garb was white as lilies,
And my thoughts as pure as snow.

Faces! ah, yes! I see them—
One, two, and three—and four—
That come in the gust of tempests,
And go on the winds that bore.
Changeful and evanescent,
They shine 'mid storm and rain,
Till the terror of their beauty
Lies deep upon my brain.

One of them frowns; *I* know him,
With his thin, long, snow-white hair,—
Cursing his wretched daughter
That drove him to despair.
And the other, with wakening pity
In her large tear-streaming eyes,
Seems as she yearned toward me,
And whispered, "Paradise."

They pass,—they melt in the ripples,
And I shut mine eyes, that burn,
To escape another vision
That follows where'er I turn—
The face of a false deceiver
That lives and lies; ah, me!
Though I see it in the pavement,
Mocking my misery!

They are gone!—all three!—quite vanished!
Let nothing call them back!
For I 've had enough of phantoms,
And my heart is on the rack!
God help me in my sorrow;
But *there*—in the wet, cold stone,
Smiling in heavenly beauty,
I see my lost, mine own!

There on the glimmering pavement,
With eyes as blue as morn,
Floats by the fair-haired darling
Too soon from my bosom torn.
She clasps her tiny fingers—
She calls me sweet and mild,
And says that my God forgives me
For the sake of my little child.

I will go to her grave to-morrow,
And pray that I may die;
And I hope that my God will take me
Ere the days of my youth go by.
For I am old in anguish,
And long to be at rest,
With my little babe beside me,
And the daisies on my breast.

THE DEATH-SONG OF THE POET.

I HAVE a people of mine own,
And great or small, whate'er they be,
'T is Harp and Harper, touch and tone—
There 's music between them and me.

And let none say, when low in death
The soul-inspiring minstrel lies,
That I misused my hand or breath
For favor in the people's eyes.

Whate'er my faults as mortal man,
Let foes revive them if they must!
And yet a grave is ample span
To hide their memory with my dust!

But give, oh! give me what I claim,—
The Harper's meed, the Minstrel's crown—
I never sang for sake of Fame,
Or clutched at baubles of renown.

I spoke my thought, I sang my song,
Because I pitied, felt, and knew;
I never glorified a wrong,
Or sang approval of th' untrue.

And if I touched the people's heart,
Is that a crime in true men's eyes,
Or desecration of an art
That speaks to human sympathies?

As man, let men my worth deny;
As Harper, by my harp I stand,
And dare the Future to deny
The might that quivered from my hand.

A King of Bards, though scorned and poor
I feel the crown upon my head,
And Time shall but the more secure
My right to wear it.—I have said.

THE LOST DAY.

FAREWELL, oh day misspent;
Thy fleeting hours were lent
In vain to my endeavor.
In shade and sun
Thy race is run
For ever! oh, for ever!
The leaf drops from the tree,
The sand falls in the glass,
And to the dread Eternity
The dying minutes pass.

It was not till thine end
I knew thou wert my friend;
But now, thy worth recalling,
My grief is strong
I did thee wrong,
And scorned thy treasures falling.

Digitized by Google

But sorrow comes too late;
Another day is born;—
Pass, minutes, pass; may better fate
Attend to-morrow morn.

O birth! O death of Time!
O mystery sublime!
Ever the rippling ocean
Brings forth the wave
To smile or rave,
And die of its own motion.
A little wave to strike
The sad, responsive shore,
And be succeeded by its like
Ever and evermore.

O change from same to same!
O quenched, yet burning flame!
O new birth, born of dying!
O transient ray!
O speck of day!
Approaching and yet flying;—
Pass to Eternity.
Thou day, that came in vain!
A new wave surges on the sea—
The world grows young again.

Come in, To-day, come in!
I have confessed my sin
To thee, young promise-bearer!
New Lord of Earth!
I hail thy birth—
The crown awaits the wearer.
Child of the ages past!
Sire of a mightier line!
On the same deeps our lot is cast!
The world is thine—and mine!

PIETY.

O Piety! O heavenly Piety!
She is not rigid as fanatics deem,
But warm as Love, and beautiful as Hope.

Prop of the weak, the crown of humbleness,
The clew of doubt, the eyesight of the blind,
The heavenly robe and garniture of clay.

He that is crowned with that supernal crown,
Is lord and sovereign of himself and Fate,
And angels are his friends and ministers.

Clad in that raiment, ever white and pure,
The wayside mire is harmless to defile,
And rudest storms sweep impotently by.

The pilgrim wandering amid crags and pits,
Supported by that staff shall never fall:
He smiles at peril, and defies the storm.

Shown by that clew, the doubtful path is clear,
The intricate snares and mazes of the world
Are all unlabyrinthed and bright as day.

Sweet Piety! divinest Piety!
She has a soul capacious as the spheres,
A heart as large as all humanity.

Who to his dwelling takes that visitant,
Has a perpetual solace in all pain,
A friend and comforter in every grief.

The noblest domes, the haughtiest palaces,
That know not her, have ever open gates
Where Misery may enter at her will.

But from the threshhold of the poorest hut,
Where she sits smiling, Sorrow passes by,
And owns the spell that robs her of her sting.

TUBAL CAIN.

Old Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when Earth was young;
By the fierce red light of his furnace bright
The strokes of his hammer rung;
And he lifted high his brawny hand
On the iron glowing clear,
Till the sparks rushed out in scarlet showers,
As he fashioned the sword and spear.
And he sang—"Hurra for my handiwork!
Hurra for the spear and sword!
Hurra for the hand that shall wield them well,
For he shall be king and lord!"

To Tubal Cain came many a one,
As he wrought by his roaring fire,
And each one prayed for a strong steel blade
As the crown of his desire:
And he made them weapons sharp and strong,
Till they shouted loud for glee,
And gave him gifts of pearl and gold,
And spoils of the forest free.
And they sang—"Hurra for Tubal Cain,
Who hath given us strength anew!
Hurra for the smith, hurra for the fire,
And hurra for the metal true!"

But a sudden change came o'er his heart
Ere the setting of the sun,
And Tubal Cain was filled with pain
For the evil he had done;
He saw that men, with rage and hate,
Made war upon their kind,
That the land was red with the blood they shed
In their lust for carnage blind.
And he said—"Alas! that ever I made,
Or that skill of mine should plan,
The spear and the sword for men whose joy
Is to slay their fellow-man."

And for many a day old Tubal Cain
Sat brooding o'er his woe;
And his hand forebore to smite the ore,
And his furnace smouldered low.
But he rose at last with a cheerful face,
And a bright, courageous eye,
And bared his strong right arm for work,
While the quick flames mounted high.
And he sang—"Hurra for my handicraft!"
And the red sparks lit the air;
"Not alone for the blade was the bright steel made;"
And he fashioned the first ploughshare.

Digitized by Google

And men, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands,
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And ploughed the willing lands:
And sang—"Hurra for Tubal Cain!
Our staunch good friend is he;
And for the ploughshare and the plough
To him our praise shall be.
But while Oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the plough,
We'll not forget the sword!"

THE RIM OF THE BOWL.

I SAT 'mid the flickering lights, when all the guests had departed,
Alone at the head of the table, and dreamed of the days that were gone;
Neither asleep nor waking, nor sad nor cheery-hearted—
But passive as a leaf by the wild November blown.
I thought—if thinking 't were, when thoughts were dimmer than shadows—
And toyed the while with the music I drew from the rim of the bowl,
Passing my fingers round, as if my will compelled it
To answer my shapeless dreams, as soul might answer soul.

Idle I was, and listless; but melody and fancy
Came out of that tremulous dulcimer, as my hand around it strayed;
The rim was a magic circle, and mine was the necromancy
That summoned its secrets forth, to take the forms I bade.
Secrets! ay! buried secrets, forgotten for twenty summers,
But living anew in the odors of the roses at the board;
Secrets of Truth and Passion, and the days of Life's unreason;
Perhaps not at all atoned for, in the judgments of the Lord.

Secrets that still shall slumber, for I will not bare my bosom
To the gaze of the heartless, prying, unconscionable crowd,
That would like to know, I doubt not, how much I have sinned and suffered,
And drag me down to its level—because it would humble the proud.
Beautiful spirits they were, that danced on the rim at my bidding:
Spirits of Joy or Sadness, in their brief sweet summer day;
Spirits that aye possess me, and keep me, if I wander,
In the line of the straight, and the flower of the fruitful way.
Spirits of women and children—spirits of friends departed—
Spirits of dear companions that have gone to the levelling tomb,
Hallowed for ever and ever with the sanctity of sorrow,
And the aureole of death that crowns them in the gloom.
Spirits of Hope and Faith, and one supremely lovely,
That sang to me years agone, when I was a little child,
And sported at her footstool, or lay upon her bosom,
And gazed at the love that dazzled me from her eyes so soft and mild.

And that song from the rim of the bowl came sounding and sounding ever—
As oft it had done before in the toil and moil of life;
A song nor sad nor merry, but low and sweet and plaintive;
A clarion-blast in sorrow; an anodyne in strife;
A song like a ray of moonlight that gleams athwart a tempest.
Sound ever, O Song! sound sweetly, whether I live or die,
My guardian, my adviser, my comforter, my comrade,
A voice from the sinless regions—a message from the sky!

SISYPHUS.

EVER and everermore
Upon the steep life-shore
Of Death's dark main,
Bare to the bitter skies,
His mournful task he plies
In vain, in vain!

Sometimes he looks to Heaven
And asks to be forgiven
The grievous pain.
The stars look sadly down,
The cold sun seems to frown—
In vain, in vain!

But kindly mother Earth,
Remembering his birth,
Doth not disdain
To sympathize with him,
So worn of heart and limb;
In vain, in vain!

Is not his fate her own?
The rolling toilsome stone
Rolled back again!
Are not her children's woes
The very same he knows?—
In vain, in vain!

Do not all Earth and Sea
Repeat eternally
Th' unvarying strain?

Digitized by Google

The old and sad lament
With human voices blent,
In vain, in vain!

Through the green forest arch
The wild winds in their march
Sigh and complain;
The torrent on the hill
Moans to the midnight chill,
In vain, in vain!

The hoarse, monotonous waves
Attune from all their caves,
Through storm and rain,
The melancholy cry,
To listening Earth and Sky,
In vain, in vain!

Love mourns its early dead;
Hope its illusions fled,
Or rudely slain;
And Wealth and Power prolong
The same, th' eternal song,
In vain, in vain!

Toil, Sisyphus, toil on!
Thou 'rt many, though but one!
Toil heart and brain!
One—but the type of all
Rolling the dreadful ball,
In vain, in vain!

FAR, FAR UPON THE SEA.

Far, far upon the sea,
The good ship speeding free,
Upon the deck we gather young and old;
And view the flapping sail,
Spreading out before the gale,
Full and round without a wrinkle or a fold:
Or watch the waves that glide
By the stately vessel's side,
And the wild sea-birds that follow through the air.
Or we gather in a ring,
And with cheerful voices sing,
Oh! gaily goes the ship when the wind blows fair.

Far, far upon the sea,
With the sunshine on our lee,
We talk of pleasant days when we were young,
And remember, though we roam,
The sweet melodies of home—
The songs of happy childhood which we sung;
And though we quit her shore,
To return to it no more,
Sound the glories that Britannia yet shall bear;
That "Britons rule the waves,"
"And never shall be slaves."
Oh! gaily goes the ship when the wind blows fair.

Far, far upon the sea,
Whate'er our country be,
The thought of it shall cheer us as we go.
And Scotland's sons shall join,
In the song of "Auld Lang Syne,"
With voice by memory softened, clear and low.
And the men of Erin's Isle,
Battling sorrow with a smile,
Shall sing "St. Patrick's Morning," void of care;
And thus we pass the day,
As we journey on the way;—
Oh! gaily goes the ship when the wind blows fair.

I LOVE MY LOVE.

What is the meaning of the song
That rings so clear and loud,
Thou nightingale amid the copse—
Thou lark above the cloud?
What says thy song, thou joyous thrush,
Up in the walnut-tree?
"I love my Love, because I know
My Love loves me."

What is the meaning of thy thought,
O maiden fair and young?
There is such pleasure in thine eyes,
Such music on thy tongue;
There is such glory on thy face—
What can the meaning be?
"I love my Love, because I know
My Love loves me."

O happy words! at Beauty's feet
We sing them ere our prime;
And when the early summers pass,
And Care comes on with Time,
Still be it ours, in Care's despite,
To join the chorus free—
"I love my Love, because I know
My Love loves me."

I LAY IN SORROW, DEEP DISTRESSED.

I lay in sorrow, deep distressed:
My grief a proud man heard;
His looks were cold, he gave me gold,
But not a kindly word.
My sorrow passed—I paid him back
The gold he gave to me;
Then stood erect and spoke my thanks,
And blessed his Charity.

I lay in want, in grief and pain:
A poor man passed my way;
He bound my head, he gave me bread,
He watched me night and day.
How shall I pay him back again,
For all he did to me?
Oh, gold is great, but greater far
Is heavenly Sympathy!

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN.

WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1813, and was educated there. In 1831 he received a prize for a poem entitled "Judith." His first volume, "Poland and other Poems," was not successful. He was called to the Scottish bar in 1840, and acquired a reputation for success in criminal cases. In 1845 he became Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres in the University of Edinburgh. In 1853 he delivered in London a course of lectures on poetry and the drama. He was originally a liberal in politics, but afterward became a conservative and did a good deal of political writing, for which, in 1852, he was appointed Sheriff and Vice-Admiral of Orkney. He was a voluminous contributor of tales and poetry to "Blackwood's Magazine." His publications in book form were: "Life and Times of Richard I.," 1840; "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers and other Poems," 1849; "Firmilian, a Spasmodic Tragedy," 1854; and "Bothwell," 1856. He also edited "Scottish Ballads," 1858, and with Theodore Martin published translations from Goethe and wrote the "Bon Gaultier Ballads." Several of these ballads are intended to satirize things American; but their ludicrous betrayals of ignorance of every thing American so far exceed their wit, that readers on this side of the Atlantic can hardly be offended by their spitefulness. He married a daughter of Prof. John Wilson; and it is related that when he asked for her hand, Wilson, without saying a word, tore from a book he was reviewing a fly-leaf which bore the words "with the author's compliments," pinned it to her dress, and led her across the room to her lover.

Aytoun died in Edinburgh, August 4, 1865. His life, by Theodore Martin, was published in 1868. His poems have been republished in New York, in two volumes.

EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN.

NEWS of battle!—news of battle!
  Hark! 't is ringing down the street:
And the archways and the pavement
  Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle! who hath brought it?
  News of triumph? Who should bring
Tidings from our noble army,
  Greetings from our gallant king?
All last night we watched the beacons
  Blazing on the hills afar,
Each one bearing, as it kindled,
  Message of the opened war.
All night long the northern streamers
  Shot across the trembling sky:
Fearful lights, that never beckon
  Save when kings or heroes die.

News of battle! Who hath brought it?
  All are thronging to the gate;
"Warder—warder! open quickly!
  Man—is this a time to wait?"
And the heavy gates are opened:
  Then a murmur long and loud,
And a cry of fear and wonder
  Bursts from out the bending crowd.
For they see in battered harness
  Only one hard-stricken man;
And his weary steed is wounded,
  And his cheek is pale and wan:
Spearless hangs a bloody banner
  In his weak and drooping hand—
God! can that be Randolph Murray,
  Captain of the city band?
Round him crush the people, crying,
  "Tell us all—oh, tell us true!
Where are they who went to battle,
  Randolph Murray, sworn to you?
Where are they, our brothers—children?
  Have they met the English foe?
Why art thou alone, unfollowed?
  Is it weal or is it woe?"
Like a corpse the grisly warrior
  Looks from out his helm of steel;
But no word he speaks in answer—
  Only with his armèd heel
Chides his weary steed, and onward
  Up the city streets they ride;
Fathers, sisters, mothers, children,
  Shrieking, praying by his side.
"By the God that made thee, Randolph!
  Tell us what mischance hath come."
Then he lifts his riven banner,
  And the asker's voice is dumb.

The elders of the city
  Have met within their hall—
The men whom good King James had charged
  To watch the tower and wall.
"Your hands are weak with age," he said,
  "Your hearts are stout and true;
So bide ye in the Maiden Town,
  While others fight for you.
My trumpet from the Border-side
  Shall send a blast so clear,
That all who wait within the gate
  That stirring sound may hear.
Or, if it be the will of Heaven
  That back I never come,

Digitized by Google

And if, instead of Scottish shouts,
  Ye hear the English drum—
Then let the warning bells ring out,
  Then gird you to the fray,
Then man the walls like burghers stout,
  And fight while fight you may.
'T were better that in fiery flame
  The roofs should thunder down,
Than that the foot of foreign foe
  Should trample in the town!"

Then in came Randolph Murray—
  His step was slow and weak,
And, as he doffed his dinted helm,
  The tears ran down his cheek:
They fell upon his corslet
  And on his mailèd hand,
As he gazed around him wistfully,
  Leaning sorely on his brand.
And none who then beheld him
  But straight were smote with fear,
For a bolder and a sterner man
  Had never couched a spear.
They knew so sad a messenger
  Some ghastly news must bring;
And all of them were fathers,
  And their sons were with the king.

And up then rose the Provost—
  A brave old man was he,
Of ancient name, and knightly fame,
  And chivalrous degree.
He ruled our city like a lord
  Who brooked no equal here,
And ever for the townsman's rights
  Stood up 'gainst prince and peer.
And he had seen the Scottish host
  March from the Borough-muir,
With music-storm and clamorous shout,
And all the din that thunders out
  When youth 's of victory sure.
But yet a dearer thought had he—
  For, with a father's pride,
He saw his last remaining son
  Go forth by Randolph's side,
With casque on head and spur on heel,
  All keen to do and dare;
And proudly did that gallant boy
  Dunedin's banner bear.
Oh! woful now was the old man's look,
  And he spake right heavily:
"Now, Randolph, tell thy tidings,
  However sharp they be!
Woe is written on thy visage,
  Death is looking from thy face:
Speak! though it be of overthrow—
  It cannot be disgrace!"

Right bitter was the agony
  That wrung that soldier proud:
Thrice did he strive to answer,
  And thrice he groaned aloud.
Then he gave the riven banner
  To the old man's shaking hand,
Saying: "That is all I bring ye
  From the bravest of the land!
Ay! ye may look upon it—
  It was guarded well and long,
By your brothers and your children,
  By the valiant and the strong.

One by one they fell around it,
  As the archers laid them low,
Grimly dying, still unconquered,
  With their faces to the foe.
Ay! ye may well look upon it—
  There is more than honor there,
Else, be sure, I had not brought it
  From the field of dark despair.
Never yet was royal banner
  Steeped in such a costly dye;
It hath lain upon a bosom
  Where no other shrouds shall lie.
Sirs! I charge you keep it holy,
  Keep it as a sacred thing,
For the stain ye see upon it
  Was the life-blood of your king!"

Woe, woe, and lamentation!
  What a piteous cry was there!
Widows, maidens, mothers, children,
  Shrieking, sobbing in despair!
Through the streets the death-word rushes,
  Spreading terror, sweeping on:
"Jesu Christ! our king has fallen—
  O great God, King James is gone!
Holy Mother Mary, shield us,
  Thou who erst didst lose thy Son!
O the blackest day for Scotland
  That she ever knew before!
O our king—the good, the noble,
  Shall we see him never more?
Woe to us, and woe to Scotland!
  O our sons, our sons and men!
Surely some have 'scaped the Southron,
  Surely some will come again!"
Till the oak that fell last winter
  Shall uprear its shattered stem—
Wives and mothers of Dunedin—
  Ye may look in vain for them!

But within the Council Chamber
  All was silent as the grave,
While the tempest of their sorrow
  Shook the bosoms of the brave.
Well indeed might they be shaken
  With the weight of such a blow:
He was gone—their prince, their idol,
  Whom they loved and worshipped so!
Like a knell of death and judgment
  Rung from heaven by angel-hand,
Fell the words of desolation
  On the elders of the land.
Hoary heads were bowed and trembling,
  Withered hands were clasped and wrung:
God had left the old and feeble,
  He had ta'en away the young.

Then the Provost he uprose,
  And his lip was ashen white;
But a flush was on his brow,
  And his eye was full of light.
"Thou hast spoken, Randolph Murray,
  Like a soldier stout and true;
Thou hast done a deed of daring
  Had been perilled but by few.
For thou hast not shamed to face us,
  Nor to speak thy ghastly tale,
Standing—thou a knight and captain—
  Here alive within thy mail!

Digitized by Google

Now, as my God shall judge me,
  I hold it braver done,
Than hadst thou tarried in thy place,
  And died above my son!
Thou needst not tell it: he is dead.
  God help us all this day!
But speak—how fought the citizens
  Within the furious fray!
For, by the might of Mary!
  'T were something still to tell
That no Scottish foot went backward
  When the Royal Lion fell!"

"No one failed him! He is keeping
  Royal state and semblance still;
Knight and noble lie around him,
  Cold on Flodden's fatal hill.
Of the brave and gallant-hearted,
  Whom ye sent with prayers away,
Not a single man departed
  From his Monarch yesterday.
Had you seen them, O my masters!
  When the night began to fall,
And the English spearmen gathered
  Round the grim and ghastly wall!
As the wolves in winter circle
  Round the leaguer on the heath,
So the greedy foe glared upward,
  Panting still for blood and death.
But a rampart rose before them,
  Which the boldest dare not scale;
Every stone a Scottish body,
  Every step a corpse in mail!
And behind it lay our Monarch,
  Clenching still his shivered sword:
By his side Montrose and Athole,
  At his feet a Southron lord.
All so thick they lay together,
  When the stars lit up the sky,
That I knew not who were stricken,
  Or who yet remained to die.
Few there were when Surrey halted,
  And his wearied host withdrew;
None but dying men around me,
  When the English trumpet blew.
Then I stooped and took the banner,
  As you see it from his breast,
And I closed our hero's eyelids,
  And I left him to his rest.
In the mountains growled the thunder,
  As I leaped the woful wall,
And the heavy clouds were settling
  Over Flodden, like a pall."

So he ended. And the others
  Cared not any answer then:
Sitting silent, dumb with sorrow,
  Sitting anguish-struck, like men
Who have seen the roaring torrent
  Sweep their happy homes away,
And yet linger by the margin,
  Staring wildly on the spray.
But, without, the maddening tumult
  Waxes ever more and more,
And the crowd of wailing women
  Gather round the council-door.
Every dusky spire is ringing
  With a dull and hollow knell,
And the Miserere 's singing
  To the tolling of the bell.

Through the streets the burghers hurry,
  Spreading terror as they go;
And the rampart 's thronged with watchers
  For the coming of the foe.
From each mountain-top a pillar
  Streams into the torpid air,
Bearing token from the Border
  That the English host is there.
All without is flight and terror,
  All within is woe and fear—
God protect thee, Maiden City,
  For thy latest hour is near!

No! not yet, thou high Dunedin!
  Shalt thou totter to thy fall;
Though thy bravest and thy strongest
  Are not there to man the wall.
No, not yet! the ancient spirit
  Of our fathers hath not gone;
Take it to thee as a buckler
  Better far than steel or stone.
Oh, remember those who perished
  For thy birthright at the time
When to be a Scot was treason,
  And to side with Wallace, crime!
Have they not a voice among us,
  While their hallowed dust is here?
Hear ye not a summons sounding
  From each buried warrior's bier?
Up!—they say—and keep the freedom
  Which we won you long ago:
Up! and keep your graves unsullied
  From the insults of the foe!
Up! and if ye cannot save them,
  Come to us in blood and fire:
'Midst the crash of falling turrets,
  Let the last of Scots expire!

Still the bells are tolling fiercely,
  And the cry comes louder in;
Mothers wailing for their children,
  Sisters for their slaughtered kin.
All is terror and disorder,
  Till the Provost rises up,
Calm, as though he had not tasted
  Of the fell and bitter cup.
All so stately from his sorrow,
  Rose the old undaunted Chief,
That you had not deemed, to see him,
  His was more than common grief.
"Rouse ye, Sirs!" he said; "we may not
  Longer mourn for what is done;
If our king be taken from us,
  We are left to guard his son.
We have sworn to keep the city
  From the foe, whate'er they be,
And the oath that we have taken
  Never shall be broke by me.
Death is nearer to us, brethren,
  Than it seemed to those who died,
Fighting yesterday at Flodden,
  By their lord and master's side.
Let us meet it then in patience,
  Not in terror or in fear;
Though our hearts are bleeding yonder,
  Let our souls be steadfast here.
Up, and rouse ye! Time is fleeting,
  And we yet have much to do;
Up, and haste ye through the city,
  Stir the burghers stout and true!

Digitized by Google

Gather all our scattered people,
  Fling the banner out once more—
Randolph Murray! do thou bear it,
  As it erst was borne before:
Never Scottish heart will leave it,
  When they see their Monarch's gore!

"Let them cease that dismal knelling!
  It is time enough to ring,
When the fortress-strength of Scotland
  Stoops to ruin like its King.
Let the bells be kept for warning,
  Not for terror or alarm;
When they next are heard to thunder,
  Let each man and stripling arm.
Bid the women leave their wailing—
  Do they think that woful strain,
From the bloody heaps of Flodden,
  Can redeem their dearest slain?
Bid them cease—or rather hasten
  To the churches, every one;
There to pray to Mary Mother,
  And to her anointed Son,
That the thunderbolt above us
  May not fall in ruin yet;
That in fire and blood and rapine
  Scotland's glory may not set.
Let them pray—for never women
  Stood in need of such a prayer!—
England's yeomen shall not find them
  Clinging to the altars there.
No! if we are doomed to perish,
  Man and maiden, let us fall.
And a common gulf of ruin
  Open wide to whelm us all!
Never shall the ruthless spoiler
  Lay his hot insulting hand
On the sisters of our heroes,
  While we bear a torch or brand!
Up! and rouse ye, then, my brothers—
  But when next ye hear the bell
Sounding forth the sullen summons
  That may be our funeral knell,
Once more let us meet together,
  Once more see each other's face;
Then, like men that need not tremble,
  Go to our appointed place.
God, our Father, will not fail us
  In that last tremendous hour—
If all other bulwarks crumble,
  He will be our strength and tower
Though the ramparts rock beneath us
  And the walls go crashing down,
Though the roar of conflagration
  Bellow o'er the sinking town—
There is yet one place of shelter,
  Where the foeman cannot come,
Where the summons never sounded
  Of the trumpet or the drum.
There again we 'll meet our children,
  Who on Flodden's trampled sod,
For their king and for their country,
  Rendered up their souls to God.
There shall we find rest and refuge,
  With our dear departed brave;
And the ashes of the city
  Be our universal grave!"

THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE.

Come hither, Evan Cameron!
  Come, stand beside my knee—
I hear the river roaring down
  Toward the wintry sea.
There 's shouting on the mountain-side,
  There 's war within the blast—
Old faces look upon me,
  Old forms go trooping past.
I hear the pibroch wailing
  Amid the din of fight,
And my dim spirit wakes again
  Upon the verge of night.

'T was I that led the Highland host
  Through wild Lochaber's snows,
What time the plaided clans came down
  To battle with Montrose.
I 've told thee how the Southrons fell
  Beneath the broad claymore,
And how we smote the Campbell clan
  By Inverlochy's shore.
I've told thee how we swept Dundee,
  And tamed the Lindsay's pride;
But never have I told thee yet
  How the great Marquis died.

A traitor sold him to his foes;—
  Oh deed of deathless shame!
I charge thee, boy, if e'er thou meet
  With one of Assynt's name—
Be it upon the mountain's side,
  Or yet within the glen,
Stand he in martial gear alone,
  Or backed by armèd men—
Face him as thou wouldst face the man
  Who wronged thy sire's renown;
Remember of what blood thou art,
  And strike the caitiff down!

They brought him to the Watergate,
  Hard bound with hempen span,
As though they held a lion there,
  And not a fenceless man.
They set him high upon a cart—
  The hangman rode below—
They drew his hands behind his back,
  And bared his noble brow.
Then, as a hound is slipped from leash,
  They cheered the common throng,
And blew the note with yell and shout,
  And bade him pass along.

It would have made a brave man's heart
  Grow sad and sick that day,
To watch the keen malignant eyes
  Bent down on that array.
There stood the Whig west-country lords
  In balcony and bow;
There sat their gaunt and withered dames,
  And their daughters all a-row.
And every open window
  Was full as full might be
With black-robed Covenanting carles,
  That goodly sport to see!

But when he came, though pale and wan,
  He looked so great and high,

Digitized by Google

So noble was his manly front,
  So calm his steadfast eye—
The rabble rout forbore to shout,
  And each man held his breath,
For well they knew the hero's soul
  Was face to face with death.
And then a mournful shudder
  Through all the people crept,
And some that came to scoff at him
  Now turned aside and wept.

But onward—always onward,
  In silence and in gloom,
The dreary pageant labored,
  Till it reached the house of doom.
Then first a woman's voice was heard
  In jeer and laughter loud,
And an angry cry and a hiss arose
  From the heart of the tossing crowd;
Then, as the Græme looked upward,
  He saw the ugly smile
Of him who sold his king for gold—
  The master-fiend Argyle!

The Marquis gazed a moment,
  And nothing did he say,
But the cheek of Argyle grew ghastly pale,
  And he turned his eyes away.
The painted harlot by his side,
  She shook through every limb,
For a roar like thunder swept the street,
  And hands were clenched at him;
And a Saxon soldier cried aloud,
  "Back, coward, from thy place!
For seven long years thou hast not dared
  To look him in the face."

Had I been there with sword in hand,
  And fifty Camerons by,
That day through high Dunedin's streets
  Had pealed the slogan-cry.
Not all their troops of trampling horse,
  Nor might of mailèd men—
Not all the rebels in the south
  Had borne us backward then!
Once more his foot on Highland heath
  Had trod as free as air,
Or I, and all who bore my name,
  Been laid around him there!

It might not be. They placed him next
  Within the solemn hall,
Where once the Scottish kings were throned
  Amid their nobles all.
But there was dust of vulgar feet
  On that polluted floor,
And perjured traitors filled the place
  Where good men sate before.
With savage glee came Warriston
  To read the murderous doom;
And then uprose the great Montrose
  In the middle of the room.

"Now, by my faith as belted knight,
  And by the name I bear,
And by the bright Saint Andrew's cross
  That waves above us there—
Yea, by a greater, mightier oath—
  And oh, that such should be!—
By that dark stream of royal blood
  That lies 'twixt you and me—
I have not sought in battle-field
  A wreath of such renown,
Nor dared I hope on my dying day
  To win the martyr's crown!

"There is a chamber far away
  Where sleep the good and brave,
But a better place ye have named for me
  Than by my father's grave.
For truth and right, 'gainst treason's might,
  This hand hath always striven,
And ye raise it up for a witness still
  In the eye of earth and heaven.
Then nail my head on yonder tower—
  Give every town a limb—
And God who made shall gather them:
  I go from you to him!"

The morning dawned full darkly,
  The rain came flashing down,
And the jagged streak of the levin-bolt
  Lit up the gloomy town:
The thunder crashed across the heaven,
  The fatal hour was come;
Yet aye broke in, with muffled beat,
  The 'larum of the drum.
There was madness on the earth below,
  And anger in the sky,
And young and old, and rich and poor,
  Came forth to see him die.

Ah, God! that ghastly gibbet!
  How dismal 'tis to see
The great, tall, spectral skeleton,
  The ladder and the tree!
Hark! hark! it is the clash of arms—
  The bells begin to toll—
"He is coming! he is coming!
  God's mercy on his soul!"
One last long peal of thunder—
  The clouds are cleared away,
And the glorious sun once more looks down
  Amid the dazzling day.

"He is coming! he is coming!"
  Like a bridegroom from his room,
Came the hero from his prison
  To the scaffold and the doom.
There was glory on his forehead,
  There was lustre in his eye,
And he never walked to battle
  More proudly than to die;
There was color in his visage,
  Though the cheeks of all were wan,
And they marvelled as they saw him pass,
  That great and goodly man!

He mounted up the scaffold,
  And he turned him to the crowd;
But they dared not trust the people,
  So he might not speak aloud.
But he looked upon the heavens,
  And they were clear and blue,
And in the liquid ether
  The eye of God shone through.
Yet a black and murky battlement
  Lay resting on the hill,
As though the thunder slept within—
  All else was calm and still.

Digitized by Google

The grim Geneva ministers
With anxious scowl drew near,
As you have seen the ravens flock
Around the dying deer.
He would not deign them word, nor sign,
But alone he bent the knee;
And veiled his face for Christ's dear grace
Beneath the gallows-tree.
Then radiant and serene he rose,
And cast his cloak away:
For he had ta'en his latest look
Of earth and sun and day.

A beam of light fell o'er him,
Like a glory round the shriven,
And he climbed the lofty ladder
As it were the path to heaven.
Then came a flash from out the cloud,
And a stunning thunder-roll;
And no man dared to look aloft,
For fear was on every soul.
There was another heavy sound,
A hush and then a groan;
And darkness swept across the sky—
The work of death was done!

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE.

It was upon an April morn,
While yet the frost lay hoar,
We heard Lord James's bugle-horn
Sound by the rocky shore.

Then down we went, a hundred knights,
All in our dark array,
And flung our armor in the ships
That rode within the bay.

We spoke not as the shore grew less,
But gazed in silence back,
Where the long billows swept away
The foam behind our track.

And aye the purple hues decayed
Upon the fading hill,
And but one heart in all that ship
Was tranquil, cold, and still.

The good Lord Douglas paced the deck,
And oh, his face was wan!
Unlike the flush it used to wear
When in the battle-van:

"Come hither, come hither, my trusty knight,
Sir Simon of the Lee;
There is a freit lies near my soul
I fain would tell to thee.

"Thou know'st the words King Robert spoke
Upon his dying day:
How he bade me take his noble heart
And carry it far away;

"And lay it in the holy soil
Where once the Saviour trod,
Since he might not bear the blessed Cross,
Nor strike one blow for God.

"Last night as in my bed I lay,
I dreamed a dreary dream:
Methought I saw a Pilgrim stand
In the moonlight's quivering beam.

"His robe was of the azure dye,
Snow-white his scattered hairs,
And even such a cross he bore
As good Saint Andrew bears.

"'Why go ye forth, Lord James,' he said,
'With spear and belted brand?
Why do you take its dearest pledge
From this our Scottish land?

"'The sultry breeze of Galilee
Creeps through its groves of palm,
The olive on the Holy Mount
Stands glittering in the calm.

"'But 't is not there that Scotland's heart
Shall rest by God's decree,
Till the great angel calls the dead
To rise from earth and sea!

"'Lord James of Douglas, mark my rede:
That heart shall pass once more
In fiery fight against the foe,
As it was wont of yore.

"'And it shall pass beneath the Cross,
And save King Robert's vow;
But other hands shall bear it back,
Not, James of Douglas, thou!'

"Now, by thy knightly faith, I pray,
Sir Simon of the Lee—
For truer friend had never man
Than thou hast been to me—

"If ne'er upon the Holy Land
'T is mine in life to tread,
Bear thou to Scotland's kindly earth
The relics of her dead."

The tear was in Sir Simon's eye
As he wrung the warrior's hand—
"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
I 'll hold by thy command.

"But if in battle-front, Lord James,
'T is ours once more to ride,
Nor force of man, nor craft of fiend,
Shall cleave me from thy side!"

And aye we sailed and aye we sailed,
Across the weary sea,
Until one morn the coast of Spain
Rose grimly on our lee.

And as we rounded to the port,
Beneath the watch-tower's wall,
We heard the clash of the atabals,
And the trumpet's wavering call.

"Why sounds yon Eastern music here
So wantonly and long,
And whose the crowd of armèd men
That round yon standard throng?"

Digitized by Google

"The Moors have come from Africa
To spoil and waste and slay,
And King Alonzo of Castile
Must fight with them to-day."

"Now shame it were," cried good Lord James,
"Shall never be said of me,
That I and mine have turned aside
From the Cross in jeopardie!

"Have down, have down, my merry men all—
Have down unto the plain;
We 'll let the Scottish lion loose
Within the fields of Spain!"

"Now welcome to me, noble lord,
Thou and thy stalwart power;
Dear is the sight of a Christian knight,
Who comes in such an hour!

"Is it for bond or faith you come,
Or yet for golden fee?
Or bring ye France's lilies here,
Or the flower of Burgundie!"

"God greet thee well, thou valiant king,
Thee and thy belted peers—
Sir James of Douglas am I called,
And these are Scottish spears.

"We do not fight for bond or plight,
Nor yet for golden fee;
But for the sake of our blessed Lord,
Who died upon the tree.

"We bring our great King Robert's heart
Across the weltering wave,
To lay it in the holy soil
Hard by the Saviour's grave.

"True pilgrims we, by land or sea,
Where danger bars the way;
And therefore are we here, Lord King,
To ride with thee this day!"

The King has bent his stately head,
And the tears were in his eyne—
"God's blessing on thee, noble knight,
For this brave thought of thine!

"I know thy name full well, Lord James;
And honored may I be,
That those who fought beside the Bruce
Should fight this day for me!

"Take thou the leading of the van,
And charge the Moors amain;
There is not such a lance as thine
In all the host of Spain!"

The Douglas turned toward us then—
Oh but his glance was high!—
"There is not one of all my men
But is as bold as I.

"There is not one of all my knights
But bears as true a spear—
Then onward, Scottish gentlemen,
And think King Robert's here!"

The trumpets blew, the cross-bolts flew,
The arrows flashed like flame,
As spur in side, and spear in rest,
Against the foe we came.

And many a bearded Saracen
Went down, both horse and man;
For through their ranks we rode like corn,
So furiously we ran!

But in behind our path they closed,
Though fain to let us through,
For they were forty thousand men,
And we were wondrous few.

We might not see a lance's length,
So dense was their array,
But the long fell sweep of the Scottish blade
Still held them hard at bay.

"Make in! make in!" Lord Douglas cried—
"Make in, my brethren dear!
Sir William of Saint Clair is down;
We may not leave him here!"

But thicker, thicker grew the swarm,
And sharper shot the rain,
And the horses reared amid the press,
But they would not charge again.

"Now Jesu help thee," said Lord James,
"Thou kind and true Saint Clair!
And, if I may not bring thee off,
I 'll die beside thee there!"

Then in his stirrups up he stood,
So lion-like and bold,
And held the precious heart aloft
All in its case of gold.

He flung it from him, far ahead,
And never spake he more,
But—"Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart,
As thou wert wont of yore!"

The roar of fight rose fiercer yet,
And heavier still the stour,
Till the spears of Spain came shivering in,
And swept away the Moor.

"Now praised be God, the day is won!
They fly o'er flood and fell—
Why dost thou draw the rein so hard,
Good knight, that fought so well?"

"Oh, ride ye on, Lord King!" he said,
"And leave the dead to me,
For I must keep the dreariest watch
That ever I shall dree!

"There lies, above his master's heart,
The Douglas, stark and grim;
And woe is me I should be here,
Not side by side with him!

"The world grows cold, my arm is old,
And thin my lyart hair,
And all that I loved best on earth
Is stretched before me there.

Digitized by Google

"O Bothwell banks! that bloom so bright
Beneath the sun of May,
The heaviest cloud that ever blew
Is bound for you this day.

"And Scotland! thou mayst veil thy head
In sorrow and in pain:
The sorest stroke upon thy brow
Hath fallen this day in Spain!

"We'll bear them back unto our ship,
We'll bear them o'er the sea,
And lay them in the hallowed earth,
Within our own countrie.

"And be thou strong of heart, Lord King,
For this I tell thee sure,
The sod that drank the Douglas' blood
Shall never bear the Moor!"

The King he 'lighted from his horse,
He flung his brand away,
And took the Douglas by the hand,
So stately as he lay.

"God give thee rest, thou valiant soul!
That fought so well for Spain;
I 'd rather half my land were gone,
So thou wert here again!"

We bore the good Lord James away,
And the priceless heart we bore,
And heavily we steered our ship
Toward the Scottish shore.

No welcome greeted our return,
Nor clang of martial tread,
But all were dumb and hushed as death
Before the mighty dead.

We laid our chief in Douglas Kirk,
The heart in fair Melrose;
And woful men were we that day—
God grant their souls repose!

THE BURIAL-MARCH OF DUNDEE.

Sound the fife, and cry the slogan—
Let the pibroch shake the air
With its wild triumphal music,
Worthy of the freight we bear.
Let the ancient hills of Scotland
Hear once more the battle-song
Swell within their glens and valleys
As the clansmen march along!
Never from the field of combat,
Never from the deadly fray,
Was a nobler trophy carried
Than we bring with us to-day;
Never since the valiant Douglas
On his dauntless bosom bore
Good King Robert's heart—the priceless—
To our dear Redeemer's shore!
Lo! we bring with us the hero—
Lo! we bring the conquering Græme,
Crowned as best beseems a victor
From the altar of his fame;
Fresh and bleeding from the battle
Whence his spirit took its flight,
'Midst the crashing charge of squadrons,
And the thunder of the fight!
Strike, I say, the notes of triumph,
As we march o'er moor and lea!
Is there any here will venture
To bewail our dead Dundee?
Let the widows of the traitors
Weep until their eyes are dim!
Wail we may full well for Scotland—
Let none dare to mourn for him!
See! above his glorious body
Lies the royal banner's fold—
See! his valiant blood is mingled
With its crimson and its gold.
See how calm he looks and stately,
Like a warrior on his shield,
Waiting till the flush of morning
Breaks along the battle-field!
See—oh never more, my comrades,
Shall we see that falcon-eye
Redden with its inward lightning,
As the hour of fight drew nigh!
Never shall we hear the voice that,
Clearer than the trumpet's call,
Bade us strike for King and Country,
Bade us win the field, or fall!

On the heights of Killiecrankie
Yester-morn our army lay:
Slowly rose the mist in columns
From the river's broken way;
Hoarsely roared the swollen torrent,
And the Pass was wrapped in gloom,
When the clansmen rose together
From their lair amid the broom.
Then we belted on our tartans,
And our bonnets down we drew,
And we felt our broadswords' edges,
And we proved them to be true;
And we prayed the prayer of soldiers,
And we cried the gathering-cry,
And we clasped the hands of kinsmen,
And we swore to do or die!
Then our leader rode before us
On his war-horse black as night—
Well the Cameronian rebels
Knew that charger in the fight!—
And a cry of exultation
From the bearded warriors rose;
For we loved the house of Claver'se,
And we thought of good Montrose.
But he raised his hand for silence—
"Soldiers! I have sworn a vow:
Ere the evening star shall glisten
On Schehallion's lofty brow,
Either we shall rest in triumph,
Or another of the Græmes
Shall have died in battle-harness
For his Country and King James!
Think upon the Royal Martyr—
Think of what his race endure—
Think on him whom butchers murdered
On the field of Magus Muir:—
By his sacred blood I charge ye,
By the ruined hearth and shrine—
By the blighted hopes of Scotland,
By your injuries and mine—

Digitized by Google

Strike this day as if the anvil
  Lay beneath your blows the while.
Be they Covenanting traitors,
  Or the brood of false Argyle!
Strike! and drive the trembling rebels
  Backward o'er the stormy Forth;
Let them tell their pale Convention
  How they fared within the North.
Let them tell that Highland honor
  Is not to be bought nor sold,
That we scorn their prince's anger
  As we loathe his foreign gold.
Strike! and when the fight is over,
  If you look in vain for me,
Where the dead are lying thickest
  Search for him that was Dundee!"

Loudly then the hills re-echoed
  With our answer to his call,
But a deeper echo sounded
  In the bosoms of us all.
For the lands of wide Breadalbane,
  Not a man who heard him speak
Would that day have left the battle.
  Burning eye and flushing cheek
Told the clansmen's fierce emotion,
  And they harder drew their breath;
For their souls were strong within them,
  Stronger than the grasp of death.
Soon we heard a challenge-trumpet
  Sounding in the Pass below,
And the distant tramp of horses,
  And the voices of the foe;
Down we crouched amid the bracken,
  Till the Lowland ranks drew near,
Panting like the hounds in summer,
  When they scent the stately deer.
From the dark defile emerging,
  Next we saw the squadrons come.
Leslie's foot and Leven's troopers
  Marching to the tuck of drum:
Through the scattered wood of birches,
  O'er the broken ground and heath,
Wound the long battalion slowly,
  Till they gained the field beneath;
Then we bounded from our covert—
  Judge how looked the Saxons then,
When they saw the rugged mountain
  Start to life with armed men!
Like a tempest down the ridges
  Swept the hurricane of steel,
Rose the slogan of Macdonald—
  Flashed the broadsword of Locheill!
Vainly sped the withering volley
  'Mong the foremost of our band—
On we poured until we met them,
  Foot to foot, and hand to hand.
Horse and man went down like drift-wood
  When the floods are black at Yule,
And their carcasses are whirling
  In the Garry's deepest pool.
Horse and man went down before us—
  Living foe there tarried none
On the field of Killiecrankie,
  When that stubborn fight was done!

And the evening star was shining
  On Schehallion's distant head,
When we wiped our bloody broadswords,
  And returned to count the dead.

There we found him gashed and gory,
  Stretched upon the cumbered plain,
As he told us where to seek him,
  In the thickest of the slain.
And a smile was on his visage,
  For within his dying ear
Pealed the joyful note of triumph,
  And the clansmen's clamorous cheer:
So, amid the battle's thunder,
  Shot, and steel, and scorching flame,
In the glory of his manhood
  Passed the spirit of the Græme!

Open wide the vaults of Athol,
  Where the bones of heroes rest—
Open wide the hallowed portals
  To receive another guest!
Last of Scots, and last of freemen—
  Last of all that dauntless race
Who would rather die unsullied
  Than outlive the land's disgrace!
O thou lion-hearted warrior!
  Reck not of the after-time:
Honor may be deemed dishonor,
  Loyalty be called a crime:
Sleep in peace with kindred ashes
  Of the noble and the true,
Hands that never failed their country,
  Hearts that never baseness knew.
Sleep!—and till the latest trumpet
  Wakes the dead from earth and sea,
Scotland shall not boast a braver
  Chieftain than our own Dundee!

THE REFUSAL OF CHARON.

(FROM THE ROMAIC.)

Why look the distant mountains
  So gloomy and so drear?
Are rain-clouds passing o'er them,
  Or is the tempest near?
No shadow of the tempest
  Is there, nor wind nor rain;
'T is Charon that is passing by,
  With all his gloomy train.

The young men march before him,
  In all their strength and pride;
The tender little infants,
  They totter by his side;
The old men walk behind him,
  And earnestly they pray,
Both old and young imploring him
  To grant some brief delay:

"O Charon, halt, we pray thee,
  By yonder little town,
Or near that sparkling fountain,
  Where the waters wimple down.
The old will drink and be refreshed,
  The young the disc will fling,
And the tender little children
  Pluck flowers beside the spring."

"I will not stay my journey,
  Nor halt by any town,
Near any sparkling fountain
  Where the waters wimple down.
The mothers coming to the well
  Would know the babes they bore;
The wives would clasp their husbands—
  Nor could I part them more."

Digitized by Google

THOMAS DAVIS.

THOMAS OSBORNE DAVIS was born in Mallow, County Cork, Ireland, in 1814. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and was called to the Irish bar in 1840. He was conspicuous in the Young Ireland party, and was one of the founders of the famous "Nation," the organ of that party, commenced in 1842. Charles Gavan Duffy was the working editor, and he declared that good songs and ballads were absolutely necessary to the enthusiasm which its columns were intended to inspire. Davis, who had never made a rhyme, undertook to write them, simply because no one else would. The result was a series of spirited lyrics, some of which rank with the best of their kind in the language. He died in Dublin, September 16, 1845. He was the author of a life of Curran and an essay upon Irish Song. A collection of his poems was published in New York in 1860, and later a volume containing both his poems and his essays.

FONTENOY.

THRICE at the huts of Fontenoy the English column failed,
And twice the lines of Saint Antoine the Dutch in vain assailed;
For town and slope were filled with fort and flanking battery,
And well they swept the English ranks and Dutch auxiliary.
As vainly through De Barri's wood the British soldiers burst,
The French artillery drove them back diminished and dispersed.
The bloody Duke of Cumberland beheld with anxious eye,
And ordered up his last reserve, his latest chance to try.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, how fast his generals ride!
And mustering came his chosen troops like clouds at eventide.

Six thousand English veterans in stately column tread;
Their cannon blaze in front and flank, Lord Hay is at their head.
Steady they step adown the slopes, steady they mount the hill,
Steady they load, steady they fire, moving right onward still,
Betwixt the wood and Fontenoy, as through a furnace-blast,
Through rampart, trench, and palisade, and bullets showering fast;
And on the open plain above they rose and kept their course,
With ready fire and grim resolve that mocked at hostile force,
Past Fontenoy, past Fontenoy, while thinner grow their ranks,
They break as breaks the Zuyder Zee through Holland's ocean-banks.
More idly than the summer flies, French tirailleurs rush round;
As stubble to the lava-tide, French squadrons strew the ground;
Bombshell and grape and round-shot tore, still on they marched and fired;
Fast from each volley grenadier and voltigeur retired.
"Push on my household cavalry," King Louis madly cried.
To death they rush, but rude their shock, not unavenged they died.
On through the camp the column trod—King Louis turned his rein.
"Not yet, my liege," Saxe interposed; "the Irish troops remain."
And Fontenoy, famed Fontenoy, had been a Waterloo,
Had not these exiles ready been, fresh, vehement, and true.

"Lord Clare," he said, "you have your wish; there are your Saxon foes!"
The Marshal almost smiles to see how furiously he goes.
How fierce the look these exiles wear, who're wont to be so gay!
The treasured wrongs of fifty years are in their hearts to-day:
The treaty broken ere the ink wherewith 't was writ could dry;
Their plundered homes, their ruined shrines, their women's parting cry;
Their priesthood hunted down like wolves, their country overthrown—
Each looks as if revenge for all were staked on him alone.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, nor ever yet elsewhere,
Rushed on to fight a nobler band than these proud exiles were.

Digitized by Google

O'Brien's voice is hoarse with joy, as, halting, he commands:
"Fix bayonets—charge!" Like mountain-storm rush on those fiery bands.
Thin is the English column now, and faint their volleys grow,
Yet mustering all the strength they have, they make a gallant show.
They dress their ranks upon the hill, to face that battle-wind!
Their bayonets the breakers' foam, like rocks the men behind!
One volley crashes from their line, when through the surging smoke,
With empty guns clutched in their hands, the headlong Irish broke.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, hark to that fierce huzza!
"Revenge! remember Limerick! dash down the Sacsanagh!"

Like lions leaping at a fold, when mad with hunger's pang,
Right up against the English line the Irish exiles sprang;
Bright was their steel, 'tis bloody now, their guns are filled with gore;
Through scattered ranks and severed files and trampled flags they tore.
The English strove with desperate strength, paused, rallied, scattered, fled;
The green hillside is matted close with dying and with dead.
Across the plain and far away passed on that hideous wrack,
While cavalier and fantassin dash in upon their track.
On Fontenoy, on Fontenoy, like eagles in the sun,
With bloody plumes the Irish stand—the field is fought and won!

LAMENT FOR OWEN ROE O'NEILL.
1649.

"Did they dare, did they dare, to slay Owen Roe O'Neill?"
"Yes, they slew with poison him they feared to meet with steel."
"May God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow!
May they walk in living death, who poisoned Owen Roe!

"Though it break my heart to hear, say again the bitter words."
"From Derry, against Cromwell, he marched to measure swords;
But the weapon of the Saxon met him on the way,
And he died at Clough-Oughter, upon St. Leonard's day."

Wail, wail ye for the mighty one! wail, wail ye for the dead!
Quench the hearth, and hold the breath, with ashes strew the head.
How tenderly we loved him! how deeply we deplore!
Holy Saviour! but to think we shall never see him more.

Sagest in the council was he, kindest in the hall!
Sure, we never won a battle—'t was Owen won them all.
Had he lived, had he lived, our dear country had been free;
But he's dead, but he's dead, and 't is slaves we'll ever be.

O'Farrell and Clanrickarde, Preston and Red Hugh,
Audley and MacMahon—ye are valiant, wise, and true;
But—what are ye all to our darling who is gone?
The rudder of our ship was he, our castle's corner-stone!

Wail, wail him through the island! weep, weep for our pride!
Would that on the battle-field our gallant chief had died!
Weep for the victor of Benburb—weep him, young men and old;
Weep for him, ye women—your beautiful lies cold!

We thought you would not die—we were sure you would not go,
And leave us in our utmost need to Cromwell's cruel blow—
Sheep without a shepherd, when the snow shuts out the sky—
Oh! why did you leave us, Owen? Why did you die?

Soft as woman's was your voice, O'Neill; bright was your eye.
Oh! why did you leave us, Owen? Why did you die?
Your troubles are all over, you're at rest with God on high;
But we're slaves and we're orphans, Owen!—why did you die?

THE FLOWER OF FINAE.

[Early in the eighteenth century the flower of the Catholic youth of Ireland were drawn away to recruit the ranks of the Irish Brigade in the service of the King of France. These recruits were popularly known as "Wild Geese."]

Bright red is the sun on the waves of Lough Sheelin,
A cool gentle breeze from the mountain is stealing,
While fair round its islets the small ripples play,
But fairer than all is the Flower of Finae.

Her hair is like night, and her eyes like gray morning,
She trips on the heather as if its touch scorning,

Digitized by Google

Yet her heart and her lips are as mild as May day,
Sweet Eily MacMahon, the Flower of Finae.

But who down the hillside than red deer runs fleeter?
And who on the lake-side is hastening to greet her?
Who but Fergus O'Farrell, the fiery and gay,
The darling and pride of the Flower of Finae?

One kiss and one clasp, and one wild look of gladness;
Ah! why do they change on a sudden to sadness—
He has told his hard fortune, nor more he can stay,
He must leave his poor Eily to pine at Finae.

For Fergus O'Farrell was true to his sire-land,
And the dark hand of tyranny drove him from Ireland;
He joins the Brigade, in the wars far away,
But he vows he 'll come back to the Flower of Finae.

He fought at Cremona—she hears of his story;
He fought at Cassano—she's proud of his glory,
Yet sadly she sings "Shule Aroon" all the day,
"Oh, come, come, my darling, come home to Finae."

Eight long years have passed, till she 's nigh broken-hearted,
Her reel, and her rock, and her flax she has parted;
She sails with the "Wild Geese" to Flanders away,
And leaves her sad parents alone in Finae.

Lord Clare on the field of Ramillies is charging,
Before him the Sasanach squadrons enlarging—
Behind him the Cravats their sections display—
Beside him rides Fergus and shouts for Finae.

On the slopes of La Judoigne the Frenchmen are flying,
Lord Clare and his squadrons, the foe still defying,
Outnumbered and wounded, retreat in array;
And bleeding rides Fergus and thinks of Finae.

. . . . . .

In the cloisters of Ypres a banner is swaying,
And by it a pale weeping maiden is praying;
That flag 's the sole trophy of Ramillies' fray,
This nun is poor Eily, the Flower of Finae.

THE SACK OF BALTIMORE.

[Baltimore is a small seaport in the barony of Carbery, in South Munster. It grew up round a castle of O'Driscoll's, and was, after his ruin, colonized by the English. On the 20th of June, 1631. the crew of two Algerine galleys landed in the dead of the night, sacked the town, and bore off into slavery all who were not too old, or too young, or too fierce, for their purpose. The pirates were steered up the intricate channel by one Hackett, a Dungarvan fisherman, whom they had taken at sea for the purpose. Two years after he was convicted, and executed for the crime. Baltimore never recovered from this.]

The summer sun is falling soft on Carbery's hundred isles,
The summer's sun is gleaming still through Gabriel's rough defiles—
Old Inisherkin's crumbled fane looks like a moulting bird;
And in a calm and sleepy swell the ocean-tide is heard:
The hookers lie upon the beach; the children cease their play;
The gossips leave the little inn; the households kneel to pray—
And full of love and peace and rest—its daily labor o'er—
Upon that cosey creek there lay the town of Baltimore.

A deeper rest, a starry trance, has come with midnight there;
No sound, except that throbbing wave, in earth or sea or air.
The massive capes and ruined towers seem conscious of the calm;
The fibrous sod and stunted trees are breathing heavy balm.
So still the night, these two long barks round Dunashad that glide
Must trust their oars—methinks not few—against the ebbing tide—
Oh, some sweet mission of true love must urge them to the shore—
They bring some lover to his bride, who sighs in Baltimore!

All, all asleep within each roof along that rocky street,
And these must be the lover's friends, with gently-gliding feet.
A stifled gasp! a dreamy noise! "The roof is in a flame!"
From out their beds, and to their doors, rush maid and sire and dame,
And meet, upon the threshold stone, the gleaming sabre's fall,
And o'er each black and bearded face the white or crimson shawl;
The yell of "Allah!" breaks above the prayer and shriek and roar.
O blessèd God, the Algerine is lord of Baltimore!

Then flung the youth his naked hand against the shearing sword;
Then sprung the mother on the brand with which her son was gored;
Then sunk the grandsire on the floor, his grandbabes clutching wild;
Then fled the maiden moaning faint, and nestled with the child.
But see, yon pirate strangling lies, and crushed with splashing heel,
While o'er him in an Irish hand there sweeps his Syrian steel;
Though virtue sink, and courage fail, and misers yield their store,
There 's *one* hearth well avengèd in the sack of Baltimore!

Digitized by Google

Midsummer morn, in woodland nigh, the birds begin to sing;
They see not now the milking-maids, deserted is the spring!
Midsummer day, this gallant rides from distant Bandon's town,
These hookers crossed from stormy Skull, that skiff from Affadown.
They only found the smoking walls with neighbors' blood besprent,
And on the strewed and trampled beach awhile they wildly went,
Then dashed to sea, and passed Cape Clear, and saw, five leagues before,
The pirate-galleys vanishing that ravaged Baltimore.

Oh, some must tug the galley's oar, and some must tend the steed—
This boy will bear a Sheik's chibouk, and that a Bey's jerreed.
Oh, some are for the arsenals by beauteous Dardanelles,
And some are in the caravan to Mecca's sandy dells.
The maid that Bandon gallant sought is chosen for the Dey—
She's safe—she's dead—she stabbed him in the midst of his Serai;
And when to die a death of fire that noble maid they bore,
She only smiled—O'Driscoll's child—she thought of Baltimore.

'T is two long years since sunk the town beneath that bloody band,
And all around its trampled hearths a larger concourse stand,
Where high upon a gallows-tree a yelling wretch is seen—
'T is Hackett of Dungarvan—he who steered the Algerine!
He fell amid a sullen shout, with scarce a passing prayer,
For he had slain the kith and kin of many a hundred there:
Some muttered of MacMorrogh, who had brought the Norman o'er,
Some cursed him with Iscariot, that day in Baltimore.

THE WELCOME.

Come in the evening, or come in the morning;
Come when you're looked for, or come without warning;
Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,
And the oftener you come here the more I'll adore you!
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted;
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted;
The green of the trees looks far greener than ever,
And the linnets are singing, "True lovers don't sever!"

I'll pull you sweet flowers, to wear if you choose them!
Or, after you've kissed them, they'll lie on my bosom;
I'll fetch from the mountain its breeze to inspire you;
I'll fetch from my fancy a tale that won't tire you.
Oh! your step 's like the rain to the summer-vexed farmer,
Or sabre and shield to a knight without armor;
I'll sing you sweet songs till the stars rise above me,
Then, wandering, I'll wish you in silence to love me.

We'll look through the trees at the cliff and the eyry;
We'll tread round the rath on the track of the fairy;
We'll look on the stars, and we'll list to the river,
Till you ask of your darling what gift you can give her,
Oh, she'll whisper you, "Love, as unchangeably beaming,
And trust, when in secret, most tunefully streaming;
Till the starlight of heaven above us shall quiver,
As our souls flow in one down eternity's river."

So come in the evening, or come in the morning;
Come when you're looked for, or come without warning;
Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,
And the oftener you come here the more I'll adore you!
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted;
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted;
The green of the trees looks far greener than ever,
And the linnets are singing, "True lovers don't sever!"

MAIRE BHAN ASTÓR.

In a valley far away
With my Maire bhan astór,
Short would be the summer day,
Ever loving more and more;
Winter days would all grow long,
With the light her heart would pour,
With her kisses and her song,
And her loving mait go leór.
Fond is Maire bhan astór,
Fair is Maire bhan astór,
Sweet as ripple on the shore
Sings my Maire bhan astór.

Oh, her sire is very proud,
And her mother cold as stone;

Digitized by Google

But her brother bravely vowed
She should be my bride alone;
For he knew I loved her well,
And he knew she loved me too,
So he sought their pride to quell,
But 't was all in vain to sue.
True is Maire bhan astór,
Tried is Maire bhan astór,
Had I wings I 'd never soar
From my Maire bhan astór.

There are lands where manly toil
Surely reaps the crop it sows,
Glorious woods and teeming soil,
Where the broad Missouri flows;
Through the trees the smoke shall rise,
From our hearth with mait go leór,
There shall shine the happy eyes
Of my Maire bhan astór.
Mild is Maire bhan astór,
Mine is Maire bhan astór,
Saints will watch about the door
Of my Maire bhan astór.

THE BRIDE OF MALLOW.

'T was dying they thought her,
And kindly they brought her
To the banks of Blackwater,
Where her forefathers lie;
'T was the place of her childhood,
And they hoped that its wild-wood
And air soft and mild would
Soothe her spirit to die.

But she met on its border
A lad who adored her—
No rich man, nor lord, or
A coward, or slave;
But one who had worn
A green coat, and borne
A pike from Slieve Mourne,
With the patriots brave.

Oh! the banks of the stream are
Than emeralds greener;
And how should they wean her
From loving the earth?
While the song-birds so sweet,
And the waves at their feet,
And each young pair they meet,
Are all flushing with mirth.

And she listed his talk,
And he shared in her walk—
And how could she baulk
One so gallant and true?
But why tell the rest?
Her love she confest,
And sunk on his breast,
Like the eventide dew.

Ah! now her cheek glows
With the tint of the rose,
And her healthful blood flows
Just as fresh as the stream;
And her eye flashes bright,
And her footstep is light,
And sickness and blight
Fled away like a dream.

And soon by his side
She kneels a sweet bride,
In maidenly pride
And maidenly fears;
And their children were fair,
And their home knew no care,
Save that all homesteads were
Not as happy as theirs.

THE BANKS OF THE LEE.

Oh, the banks of the Lee, the banks of the Lee,
And love in a cottage for Mary and me!
There 's not in the land a lovelier tide,
And I 'm sure that there 's no one so fair as my bride.
She 's modest and meek,
There 's a down on her cheek,
And her skin is as sleek
As a butterfly's wing;
Then her step would scarce show
On the fresh-fallen snow,
And her whisper is low,
But as clear as the spring.
Oh, the banks of the Lee, the banks of the Lee,
And love in a cottage for Mary and me!
I know not how love is happy elsewhere,
I know not how any but lovers are there.

Oh, so green is the grass, so clear is the stream
So mild is the mist and so rich is the beam,
That beauty should never to other lands roam,
But make on the banks of our river its home!
When, dripping with dew,
The roses peep through,
'T is to look in at you
They are growing so fast;
While the scent of the flowers
Must be hoarded for hours,
'T is poured in such showers
When my Mary goes past.
Oh, the banks of the Lee, the banks of the Lee,
And love in a cottage for Mary and me!
Oh, Mary for me, Mary for me,
And 't is little I 'd sigh for the banks of the Lee!

EMMELINE TALBOT.

'T was a September day;
In Glenismole,
Emmeline Talbot lay
On a green knoll.
She was a lovely thing,
Fleet as a falcon's wing,
Only fifteen that spring—
Soft was her soul.

Danger and dreamless sleep
Much did she scorn,
And from her father's keep
Stole out that morn.
Toward Glenismole she hies;
Sweetly the valley lies,

Digitized by Google

Winning the enterprise—
No one to warn:

Till by the noon, at length,
High in the vale,
Emmeline found her strength
Suddenly fail.
Panting, yet pleasantly,
By Dodder-side lay she;
Thrushes sang merrily,
"Hail, sister, hail!"

Hazel and copse of oak
Made a sweet lawn,
And from the thicket broke
Rabbit and fawn.
Green were the *eiscirs* round,
Sweet was the river's sound,
Eastward flat Cruach frowned,
South lay Sliabh Bân.

Looking round Barnakeel,
Like a tall Moor
Full of impassioned zeal,
Peeped brown Kippure;
Dublin in feudal pride,
And many a hold beside,
Over Finn-ghaill preside—
Sentinels sure.

Is that a roebuck's eye
Glares from the green?
Is that a thrush's cry
Rings in the screen?
Mountaineers round her sprung;
Savage their speech and tongue,
Fierce was their chief and young—
Poor Emmeline!

"Hurrah! 't is Talbot's child,"
Shouted the kerne;
"Off to the mountains wild,
Faire, O'Byrne!"
Like a bird in a net
Strove the sweet maiden yet,
Praying and shrieking, "Let—
Let me return!"

After a moment's doubt,
Forward he sprung,
With his sword flashing out,
Wrath on his tongue:
"Touch not a hair of hers—
Dies he who finger stirs!"
Back fell the foragers—
To him she clung.

Soothing the maiden's fears,
Kneeling was he,
When burst old Talbot's spears
Out on the lea—
March men, all stanch and stout,
Shouting their Belgard shout,
"Down with the Irish rout,
Prêts d'accomplir!"

Taken thus unawares,
Some fled amain;
Fighting like forest bears,
Others were slain.

To the chief clung the maid—
How could he use his blade?
That night, upon him weighed
Fetter and chain.

Oh! but that night was long,
Lying forlorn,
Since 'mid the wassail-song,
These words were borne:
"Nathless your tears and cries,
Sure as the sun shall rise,
Connor O'Byrne dies,
Talbot has sworn."

Brightly on Tamblocht Hill
Flashes the sun;
Strained at his window-sill,
How his eyes run
From lonely Sagart slade
Down to high Tigh-bradán glade,
Landmarks of border raid,
Many a one.

Too well the captive knows
Belgard's main wall
Will, to his naked blows,
Shiver and fall,
Ere in his mountain-hold
He shall again behold
Those whose proud hearts are cold,
Weeping his thrall.

"Oh! for a mountain-side,
Bucklers and brands!
Freely I could have died
Heading my bands,
But on a felon tree"—
Bearing a fetter key,
By him all silently
Emmeline stands.

Late rose the castellan,
He had drunk deep;
Warder and serving-man
Still were asleep;
Wide is the castle-gate,
Open the captive's grate,
Fetters disconsolate
Flung in a heap.

'T is an October day,
Close by Loch Dan
Many a *creach* lay,
Many a man.
'Mong them, in gallant mien,
Connor O'Byrne is seen,
Wedded to Emmeline,
Girt by his clan!

NATIONALITY.

A NATION'S voice, a nation's voice,
It is a solemn thing,
It bids the bondage-sick rejoice;
'T is stronger than a king.
'T is like the light of many stars,
The sound of many waves—

Digitized by Google

Which brightly look through prison-bars,
And sweetly sound in caves.
Yet is it noblest, godliest known,
When righteous triumph swells its tone.

A nation's flag, a nation's flag,
If wickedly unrolled,
May foes in adverse battle drag
Its every fold from fold,
But in the cause of liberty,
Guard it 'gainst earth and hell;
Guard it till death or victory—
Look you, you guard it well!
No saint or king has tomb so proud
As he whose flag becomes his shroud.

A nation's right, a nation's right,
God gave it, and gave, too,
A nation's sword, a nation's might,
Danger to guard it through.
'T is freedom from a foreign yoke,
'T is just and equal laws,
Which deal unto the humblest folk,
As in a noble's cause.
On nations fixed in right and truth,
God would bestow eternal youth.

May Ireland's voice be ever heard
Amid the world's applause!
And never be her flagstaff stirred,
But in an honest cause!
May freedom be her every breath,
Be justice ever dear;
And never an ignoble death
May son of Ireland fear.
So the Lord God will ever smile,
With guardian grace upon our isle.

SWEET AND SAD.

'T is sweet to climb the mountain's crest,
And run like deer-hound down its breast;
'T is sweet to snuff the taintless air,
And sweep the sea with haughty stare;
And sad it is, when prison-bars
Keep watch between you and the stars;
And sad to find your footstep stayed
By prison-wall and palisade.
But 't were better be
A prisoner for ever,
With no destiny
To do, or to endeavor—
Better life to spend
A martyr or confessor,
Than in silence bend
To alien and oppressor.

'T is sweet to rule an ample realm,
Through weal and woe to hold the helm;
And sweet to strew, with plenteous hand,
Strength, health, and beauty, round your land;
And sad it is to be unprized,
While dotards rule, unrecognized;
And sad your little ones to see
Writhe in the grip of poverty.
But 't were better pine
In rags and gnawing hunger,
While around you whine
Your elder and your younger—
Better lie in pain,
And rise in pain to-morrow,
Than o'er millions reign
While those millions sorrow.

'T is sweet to own a quiet hearth,
Begirt by constancy and mirth;
'T were sweet to feel your dying clasp
Returned by friendship's steady grasp;
And sad it is to spend your life
Like sea-bird in the ceaseless strife,
Your lullaby the ocean's roar,
Your resting-place a foreign shore.
But 't were better live,
Like ship caught by Lofoden,
Than your spirit give
To be by chains corroden;
Best of all to yield
Your latest breath when lying
On a victor field,
With the green flag flying.

Human joy and human sorrow,
Light or shade from conscience borrow,
The tyrant's crown is lined with flame;
Life never paid the coward's shame;
The miser's lock is never sure;
The traitor's home is never pure;
While seraphs guard and cherubs tend
The good man's life and brave man's end.
But their fondest care
Is the patriot's prison,
Hymning through its air,
"Freedom hath arisen
Oft from statesmen's strife,
Oft from battle's flashes,
Oft from hero's life,
Oftenest from his ashes!"

THE RIGHT ROAD.

Let the feeble-hearted pine,
Let the sickly spirit whine,
But work and win be thine,
While you 've life.
God smiles upon the bold;
So, when your flag 's unrolled,
Bear it bravely till you 're cold
In the strife.

If to rank or fame you soar,
Out your spirit frankly pour;
Men will serve you and adore,
Like a king.
Woo your girl with honest pride
Till you 've won her for your bride,
Then to her, through time and tide,
Ever cling.

Never under wrongs despair:
Labor long, and everywhere;
Link your countrymen, prepare,
And strike home.
Thus have great men ever wrought;
Thus must greatness still be sought;
Thus labored, loved, and fought
Greece and Rome.

Digitized by Google

AUBREY DE VERE.

AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE was born in Limerick County, Ireland, in 1814. He is the third son of Sir Aubrey De Vere, Bart., and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. His poetical publications are: "The Waldenses, a Lyrical Tale," 1842; "The Search after Proserpine, and other Poems," 1843; "Poems, Miscellaneous and Sacred," 1856; "May Carols," 1857; "The Sisters, Innisfail, and other Poems," 1861; "The Infant Bridal, and other Poems," 1864; "Irish Odes, and other Poems" (including some of the preceding), 1869; "The Legends of St. Patrick," 1872; and "Alexander the Great, a Dramatic Poem," 1874. In prose he has published: "English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds," 1848; "Picturesque Sketches of Greece and Turkey," 1850; "The Church Settlement of Ireland, or Hibernia Pacanda," 1866; "Ireland's Church Property and the Right Use of it," 1867; and "Pleas for Secularization," 1867.

THE YEAR OF SORROW—IRELAND—1849.

I.—SPRING.

ONCE more, through God's high will, and grace
  Of hours that each its task fulfils,
Heart-healing Spring resumes her place,
  The valley throngs and scales the hills;

In vain. From earth's deep heart o'ercharged
  The exulting life runs o'er in flowers;
The slave unfed is unenlarged:
  In darkness sleep a Nation's powers.

Who knows not Spring? Who doubts, when blows
  Her breath, that Spring is come indeed?
The swallow doubts not; nor the rose
  That stirs, but wakes not; nor the weed.

I feel her near, but see her not;
  For these with pain uplifted eyes
Fall back repulsed, and vapors blot
  The vision of the earth and skies.

I see her not—I feel her near,
  As, charioted in mildest airs,
She sails through yon empyreal sphere,
  And in her arms and bosom bears

That urn of flowers and lustral dews
  Whose sacred balm, o'er all things shed,
Revives the weak, the old renews,
  And crowns with votive wreaths the dead.

Once more the cuckoo's call I hear;
  I know, in many a glen profound,
The earliest violet of the year
  Rise up like water from the ground

The thorn I know once more is white;
  And, far down many a forest-dale,
The anemones in dubious light
  Are trembling like a bridal-veil.

By streams released that singing flow
  From craggy shelf through sylvan glades
The pale narcissus, well I know,
  Smiles hour by hour on greener shades.

The honeyed cowslip tufts once more
  The golden slopes; with gradual ray
The primrose stars the rock, and o'er
  The wood-path strews its milky way.

From ruined huts and holes come forth
  Old men, and look upon the sky!
The Power Divine is on the earth:
  Give thanks to God before ye die!

And ye, O children worn and weak!
  Who care no more with flowers to play,
Lean on the grass your cold, thin cheek,
  And those slight hands, and, whispering, say,

"Stern Mother of a race unblest,
  In promise kindly, cold in deed—
Take back, O Earth, into thy breast,
  The children whom thou wilt not feed."

II.—SUMMER.

APPROVED by works of love and might,
  The Year, consummated and crowned,
Has scaled the zenith's purple height,
  And flings his robe the earth around.

Impassioned stillness—fervors calm—
  Brood, vast and bright, o'er land and deep:
The warrior sleeps beneath the palm;
  The dark-eyed captive guards his sleep.

The Iberian laborer rests from toil;
  Sicilian virgins twine the dance;
Laugh Tuscan vales in wine and oil;
  Fresh laurels flash from brows of France.

Far off, in regions of the North,
  The hunter drops his winter fur:
Sun-stricken babes their feet stretch forth;
  And nested dormice feebly stir.

Digitized by Google

But thou, O land of many woes!
  What cheer is thine? Again the breath
Of proved Destruction o'er thee blows,
  And sentenced fields grow black in death.

In horror of a new despair
  His blood-shot eyes the peasant strains,
With hands clenched fast, and lifted hair,
  Along the daily-darkening plains.

"Why trusted he to them his store?
  Why feared he not the scourge to come?"
Fool! turn the page of History o'er—
  The roll of Statutes—and be dumb!

Behold, O People! thou shalt die!
  What art thou better than thy sires?
The hunted deer a weeping eye
  Turns on his birthplace, and expires.

Lo! as the closing of a book,
  Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
Or blasted wood, or dried-up brook,
  Name, race, and Nation, thou art gone.

The stranger shall thy hearth possess;
  The stranger build upon thy grave;
But know this also—he no less
  His limit and his term shall have.

Once more thy volume, open cast,
  In thunder forth shall sound thy name;
Thy forest, hot at heart, at last
  God's breath shall kindle into flame.

Thy brook dried up a cloud shall rise,
  And stretch an hourly-widening hand,
In God's good vengeance, through the skies,
  And onward o'er the Invader's land.

Of thine, one day, a remnant left
  Shall raise o'er earth a Prophet's rod,
And teach the coasts of Faith bereft
  The names of Ireland, and of God.

III.—AUTUMN.

Then die, thou Year—thy work is done:
  The work ill done is done at last.
Far off, beyond that sinking sun
  Which sets in blood, I hear the blast

That sings thy dirge, and says: "Ascend,
  And answer make amid thy peers
(Since all things here must have an end),
  Thou latest of the famine years!"

I join that voice. No joy have I
  In all thy purple and thy gold;
Nor in that ninefold harmony
  From forest on to forest rolled:

Nor in that stormy western fire,
  Which burns on ocean's gloomy bed,
And hurls, as from a funeral-pyre,
  A glare that strikes the mountain's head;

And writes on low-hung clouds its lines
  Of cyphered flame, with hurrying hand;
And flings amid the topmost pines
  That crown the steep, a burning brand.

Make answer, Year, for all thy dead,
  Who found not rest in hallowed earth;
The widowed wife, the father fled,
  The babe age-stricken from his birth.

Make answer, Year, for virtue lost;
  For courage proof 'gainst fraud and force
Now waning like a noontide ghost;
  Affections poisoned at their source.

The laborer spurned his lying spade;
  The yeoman spurned his usless plough;
The pauper spurned the unwholesome aid,
  Obtruded once, exhausted now.

The roof-trees fall of hut and hall,
  I hear them fall, and falling cry,
"One fate for each, one fate for all;
  So wills the Law that willed a lie."

Dread power of Man! what spread the waste
  In circles hour by hour more wide,
And would not let the past be past?—
  The Law, that promised much, and lied.

Dread power of God! whom mortal years
  Nor touch nor tempt; who sitt'st sublime
In night of night—O bid thy spheres
  Resound at last a funeral-chime!

Call up at last the afflicted race,
  Whom man, not God, abolished—sore,
For centuries, their strife: the place
  That knew them once shall know no more!

IV.—WINTER.

Fall, snow, and cease not! Flake by flake
  The decent winding-sheet compose.
Thy task is just and pious; make
  An end of blasphemies and woes.

Fall flake by flake! by thee alone,
  Last friend, the sleeping draught is given:
Kind nurse, by thee the couch is strewn—
  The couch whose covering is from heaven.

Descend and clasp the mountain's crest:
  Inherit plain and valley deep:
This night on thy maternal breast
  A vanquished nation dies in sleep.

Lo; from the starry Temple Gates
  Death rides, and bears the flag of peace:
The combatants he separates;
  He bids the wrath of ages cease.

Descend, benignant Power! But oh,
  Ye torrents, shake no more the vale:
Dark streams, in silence seaward flow:
  Thou rising storm, remit thy wail.

Shake not, to-night, the cliffs of Moher,
  Nor Brandon's base, rough sea! Thou Isle,
The Rite proceeds! From shore to shore,
  Hold in thy gathered breath the while.

Fall, snow! in stillness fall, like dew,
  On church's roof and cedar's fan;
And mould thyself on pine and yew;
  And on the awful face of man.

Digitized by Google

Without a sound, without a stir,
In streets and wolds, on rock and mound,
O omnipresent Comforter,
By thee, this night, the lost are found!

On quaking moor, and mountain-moss,
With eyes upstarting at the sky,
And arms extended like a cross,
The long-expectant sufferers lie.

Bend o'er them, white-robed Acolyte!
Put forth thine hand from cloud and mist;
And minister the last sad Rite,
Where altar there is none, nor priest.

Touch thou the gates of soul and sense;
Touch darkening eyes and dying ears;
Touch stiffening hands and feet, and thence
Remove the trace of sins and tears.

And ere thou seal those filmèd eyes,
Into God's urn thy fingers dip,
And lay, 'mid eucharistic sighs,
The sacred wafer on the lip.

This night the Absolver issues forth:
This night the Eternal Victim bleeds:
O winds and woods—O heaven and earth!
Be still this night. The Rite proceeds!

STANZAS.

Her kiss, ere yet he snatched it thence
On lips like rose-leaves twice had trembled:
The Bard, and Love's Intelligence,
Marked the brief trifle ill-dissembled:

Far off a horse's hoof we heard:
She turned: her sunny blush we noted:
She sang as sings the enamoured bird—
That kiss within her fancy floated.

And just ere yet he reached the door,
So shook that white vest ringlet-shaded,
Such sweetness sank those eyelids o'er,
I knew that in her heart she made it!

Ah Girl! ah Child! To men a kiss
Is oft a seal, dissolved or broken:
To Maids the seal impressed it is—
Truth's solemn pledge—Joy's laughing token!

SAD MUSIC.

Descend into the depths forlorn
Of this obscured and silent soul,
O Song! With gradual breath, like morn,
Our spirits touch, and make them whole!

Blot thou base worlds, and make us see
Those pitying Presences which stand
Round sensuous life perpetually,
And beckon to the Spirit-land.

Teach us to feel the Truth we know:
The shores we tend to—draw them nigh:
The things that leave us—bid them go
With modulated movement by.

Song sad and sweet, the power be thine
Breeze-like o'er life's suspended wreath
To sprinkle freshening dews benign,
And waft us toward the gates of Death!

With happier grace than his who reared
The mild Caducean wand, and led
O'er Lethe's wave, no longer feared,
The pensive Shades of Heroes dead.

LINES.

Can a man sit mute by a fast-barred door
While the night-showers cut through the shivering skin,
Yet love in her hardness, love on, love more,
That cold-eyed Beauty who smiles within?
Such a man—he is dead long since—I knew:
There was one that never could know him—You!

Can a man from the gunwale his grasp relax
Nor bend his brow as he sinks in the tide,
At the veil held back by the hand of wax
That might have saved him, yet help denied?
Such a man—he is dead at last—I knew:
There was one that never could know him—You!

My friend is dead:—it was time he died!
His heart was yours while a pulse remained:
Red lips, do ye chide for pity or pride
That the beaker ye quaffed so often is drained?
By that hand of wax, by that eye's cold blue,
The prize he lost was a loss for two!

APPEARANCES.

Science her sunless vigil kept
In soundings of a league-deep sea:
The Hour had come: the Hour on swept
From Time into Eternity.

Ambition o'er the hills of War
Tracked the red path which goal hath none,
Following its blind, on-rushing star
That circles round no central sun.

O'er palace fronts Imperial pride
Raised the rich fretwork high and higher:
Through all its worlds, on wind and tide
Trade rolled the wheels that never tire.

The Lover nursed his hectic dream;
The Poet wailed a glory dead;
The Enthusiast chased a flying gleam,
While, winged with Fate, the Hour on sped.

They sowed, they reaped, they woke, they slept:
Free changed to bond, and bond to free:
Realm strove with realm, and sept with sept—
These were the things that seemed to be.

That hour, unnoticed and unknown,
An orphan laid him down to die:
That hour God reaped what God had sown:
That was alone Reality.

Digitized by Google

DEATH.

From death the strongest spirit shrinks,
For mystery veils the last dread strife:
None loves to die. And yet methinks
We have been dying all our life.

When first thy childhood sang its hymn
Above the opening bud, that hour
Thine Infancy with eyelids dim
Lay cold in death a faded flower!

When Youth in turn its place had won,
What whispered Childhood's ebbing breath?
Sad words it sighed o'er bright things gone,
And that First Sin, true Childhood's death.

And Youth was dead ere Manhood came:
And Wisdom's fruits of bitter taste
Were rooted in a soil of shame,
Poor funeral fruits of manhood's waste.

O Life, long-dying, wholly die,
That Death not less may die at last:
And live, thou great Eternity
That Present art at once and Past!

HER SHADOW.

Bending between me and the taper,
While o'er the harp her white hands strayed,
The shadows of her waving tresses
Above my hand were gently swayed.

With every graceful movement waving,
I marked their undulating swell:
I watched them while they met and parted,
Curled close or widened, rose or fell.

I laughed in triumph and in pleasure—
So strange the sport, so undesigned!
Her mother turned and asked me, gravely,
"What thought was passing through my mind?"

'T is Love that blinds the eyes of mothers;
'T is Love that makes the young maids fair!
She touched my hand; my rings she counted;
Yet never felt the shadows there.

Keep, gamesome Love, beloved Infant,
Keep ever thus all mothers blind;
And make thy dedicated virgins,
In substance as in shadow, kind!

SONNETS.

Sad is our youth, for it is ever going,
Crumbling away beneath our very feet;
Sad is our life, for onward it is flowing
In current unperceived, because so fleet;
Sad are our hopes, for they were sweet in sowing—
But tares, self-sown, have overtopped the wheat;
Sad are our joys, for they were sweet in blowing—
And still, oh still, their dying breath is sweet;
And sweet is youth, although it hath bereft us
Of that which made our childhood sweeter still;
And sweet is middle life, for it hath left us
A nearer good to cure an older ill;
And sweet are all things, when we learn to prize them
Not for their sake, but His who grants them or denies them!

The half-seen memories of childish days,
When pains and pleasures lightly came and went;
The sympathies of boyhood rashly spent
In fearful wand'rings through forbidden ways;
The vague but manly wish to tread the maze
Of life to noble ends—whereon intent,
Asking to know for what man here is sent,
The bravest heart must often pause, and gaze—
The firm resolve to seek the chosen end
Of manhood's judgment, cautious and mature—
Each of these viewless bonds binds friend to friend
With strength no selfish purpose can secure:
My happy lot is this, that all attend
That friendship which first came, and which shall last endure.

Why, if he loves you, lady, doth he hide
His love? So humble is he that his heart
Exults not in some sense of new desert
With all thy grace and goodness at his side?
Ah, trust not thou the love that hath no pride,
The pride wherein compunction claims no part,
The callous calm no doubts confuse or thwart,
The untrembling hope, and joy unsanctified.
He of your beauty prates without remorse:
You dropped last night a lily; on the sod
He let it lie, and fade in Nature's course:
He looks not on the ground your feet have trod;
He smiles but with the lips, your form in view;
And he will kiss one day your lips, not you.

Lo! as an eagle battling through a cloud,
That from his neck all night the vapor flings,
And ploughs the dark, till downward from his wings
Fierce sunrise smites with light some ship-wrecked crowd
Beneath a blind sea-cavern beat and bowed—
Thus through the storm of men, the night of things,
That principle to which the issue clings
Makes fateful way, and spurns at last its shroud.
There were that saw it with a skeptic ken:
There were that saw it not, through hate or pride;
But, conquering and to conquer, on it came,
No tool of man, but making tools of men,
Till nations shook beneath its advent wide,
And they that loosed the portent rued the same.

Digitized by Google

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER.

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER was born in Yorkshire, June 28, 1814. He graduated at Oxford, and became rector of Elton, Northamptonshire. In 1845 he embraced the Roman Catholic faith, in 1847 was ordained priest, and in 1848, with Dr. Newman, entered the order of St. Philip Neri. For several years he was superior of the Oratory at Brompton. He died there, September 26, 1863.

Faber was noted for his eloquence as a preacher. He wrote voluminously, and published, besides devotional works in prose, "The Cherwell Water-Lily, and other Poems," 1840; "The Styrian Lake, and other Poems," 1842; "Sir Lancelot, a Poem," 1844 (rewritten in 1858); "The Rosary, and other Poems," 1845; and "Catholic Hymns," 1848. His hymns were increased in number in successive editions, until the last, 1861, contained one hundred and fifty. An edition was published in New York in 1875.

THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

O LORD! my heart is sick,
Sick of this everlasting change;
And life runs tediously quick
Through its unresting race and varied range:
Change finds no likeness to itself in Thee,
And wakes no echo in Thy mute Eternity.

Dear Lord! my heart is sick
Of this perpetual lapsing time,
So slow in grief, in joy so quick,
Yet ever casting shadows so sublime:
Time of all creatures is least like to Thee,
And yet it is our share of Thine eternity.

Oh, change and time are storms
For lives so thin and frail as ours;
For change the work of grace deforms
With love that soils, and help that overpowers;
And time is strong, and, like some chafing sea,
It seems to fret the shores of thine eternity.

Weak, weak, forever weak!
We cannot hold what we possess;
Youth cannot find, age will not seek,
Oh, weakness is the heart's worst weariness:
But weakest hearts can lift their thoughts to Thee;
It makes us strong to think of Thine eternity.

Thou hadst no youth, great God,
An Unbeginning End Thou art;
Thy glory in itself abode,
And still abides in its own tranquil heart:
No age can heap its outward years on Thee:
Dear God! Thou art Thyself Thine own eternity!

Without an end or bound
Thy life lies all outspread in light;
Our lives feel Thy life all around,
Making our weakness strong, our darkness bright;
Yet is it neither wilderness nor sea,
But the calm gladness of a full eternity.

Oh, Thou art very great
To set Thyself so far above!
But we partake of Thine estate,
Established in Thy strength and in Thy love:
That love hath made eternal room for me
In the sweet vastness of its own eternity.

Oh, Thou art very meek
To overshade Thy creatures thus!
Thy grandeur is the shade we seek;
To be eternal is Thy use to us:
Ah, Blessed God! what joy it is to me
To lose all thought of self in Thine eternity!

Self-wearied, Lord! I come;
For I have lived my life too fast:
Now that years bring me nearer home,
Grace must be slowly used to make it last;
When my heart beats too quick I think of Thee,
And of the leisure of thy long eternity.

Farewell, vain joys of earth!
Farewell, all love that is not His!
Dear God! be Thou my only mirth,
Thy majesty my single timid bliss!
Oh, in the bosom of eternity
Thou dost not weary of Thyself, nor we of Thee!

Digitized by Google

THE GOD OF MY CHILDHOOD.

O God! who wert my childhood's love,
My boyhood's pure delight,
A presence felt the livelong day,
A welcome fear at night—

Oh, let me speak to Thee, dear God!
Of those old mercies past,
O'er which new mercies day by day
Such lengthening shadows cast.

They bade me call Thee Father, Lord!
Sweet was the freedom deemed,
And yet more like a mother's ways
Thy quiet mercies seemed.

At school Thou wert a kindly Face
Which I could almost see;
But home and holyday appeared
Somehow more full of Thee.

I could not sleep unless Thy Hand
Were underneath my head,
That I might kiss it, if I lay
Wakeful upon my bed.

And quite alone I never felt,—
I knew that Thou wert near,
A silence tingling in the room,
A strangely pleasant fear.

And to home-Sundays long since past
How fondly memory clings!
For then my mother told of Thee
Such sweet, such wondrous things.

I know not what I thought of Thee,
What picture I had made
Of that eternal Majesty
To whom my childhood prayed.

I know I used to lie awake,
And tremble at the shape
Of my own thoughts, yet did not wish
Thy terrors to escape.

I had no secrets as a child,
Yet never spoke of Thee;
The nights we spent together, Lord!
Were only known to me.

I lived two lives, which seemed distinct,
Yet which did intertwine:
One was my mother's—it is gone—
The other, Lord! was Thine.

I never wandered from Thee, Lord!
But sinned before Thy Face;
Yet now on looking back, my sins
Seem all beset with grace.

With age Thou grewest more divine,
More glorious than before;
I feared Thee with a deeper fear,
Because I loved Thee more.

Thou broadenest out with every year,
Each breadth of life to meet:
I scarce can think Thou art the same,
Thou art so much more sweet.

Changed and not changed, Thy present charms
Thy past ones only prove;
Oh, make my heart more strong to bear
This newness of Thy love!

These novelties of love!—when will
Thy goodness find an end?
Whither will Thy compassions, Lord!
Incredibly extend?

Father! what hast Thou grown to now?
A joy all joys above,
Something more sacred than a fear,
More tender than a love!

With gentle swiftness lead me on,
Dear God! to see Thy Face;
And meanwhile in my narrow heart
Oh, make Thyself more space!

CHRISTMAS-NIGHT.

At last Thou art come, little Saviour!
And Thine angels fill midnight with song;
Thou art come to us, Gentle Creator!
Whom Thy creatures have sighed for so long.

Chorus.

All hail, Eternal Child;
Sweet Babe of Bethlehem!
Hail God's Eternal Son,
Sweet Babe of Bethlehem!

Thou art come to Thy beautiful Mother;
She hath looked on Thy marvellous Face;
Thou art come to us, Maker of Mary!
And she was Thy channel of grace.

Thou hast brought with Thee plentiful pardon,
And our souls overflow with delight;
Our hearts are half broken, dear Jesus!
With the joy of this wonderful night.

We have waited so long for Thee, Saviour!
Art Thou come to us, dearest! at last?
Oh, bless Thee, dear Joy of Thy Mother!
This is worth all the wearisome past!

Thou art come, Thou art come, Child of Mary!
Yet we hardly believe Thou art come;—
It seems such a wonder to have Thee,
New Brother! with us in our home.

Thou wilt stay with us, Master and Maker!
Thou wilt stay with us now evermore:
We will play with Thee, beautiful Brother!
On Eternity's jubilant shore.

THE THREE KINGS.

Who are these that ride so fast o'er the desert's sandy road,
That have tracked the Red Sea shore, and have swum the torrents broad;

Digitized by Google

Whose camels' bells are tinkling through the long and starry night—
For they ride like men pursued, like the vanquished of a fight?
Who are these that ride so fast? They are Eastern monarchs three,
Who have laid aside their crowns, and renounced their high degree;
The eyes they love, the hearts they prize, the well-known voices kind,
Their people's tents, their native plains, they 've left them all behind.

The very least of faith's dim rays beamed on them from afar,
And that same hour they rose from off their thrones to track the Star;
They cared not for the cruel scorn of those who called them mad;
Messias' Star was shining, and their royal hearts were glad.

But a speck was in the midnight sky, uncertain, dim, and far,
And their hearts were pure, and heard a voice proclaim Messias' Star:
And in its golden twinkling they saw more than common light,
The Mother and the Child they saw in Bethlehem by night!

And what were crowns, and what were thrones, to such a sight as that?
So straight away they left their tents, and bade not grace to wait;
They hardly stop to slake their thirst at the desert's limpid springs,
Nor note how fair the landscape is, how sweet the skylark sings!

Whole cities have turned out to meet their royal cavalcade,
Wise colleges and doctors all their wisdom have displayed;
And when the Star was dim, they knocked at Herod's palace gate,
And troubled with the news of faith his politic estate.

And they have knelt in Bethlehem! The Everlasting Child
They saw upon His mother's lap, earth's monarch meek and mild;
His little feet, with Mary's leave, they pressed with loving kiss—
Oh what were thrones, oh what were crowns, to such a joy as this?

One little sight of Jesus was enough for many years,
One look at Him their stay and staff in the dismal vale of tears:
Their people for that sight of Him they gallantly withstood,
They taught His faith, they preached His word, and for Him shed their blood.

Ah me! what broad daylight of faith our thankless souls receive,
How much we know of Jesus, and how easy to believe;
'T is the noonday of His sunshine, of His sun that setteth never:
Faith gives us crowns, and makes us kings, and our kingdom is for ever!

Oh, glory be to God on high for these Arabian kings,
These miracles of royal faith, with Eastern offerings:
For Gaspar and for Melchior and Balthazzar who from far
Found Mary out and Jesus by the shining of a Star!

LONGING FOR GOD.

How gently flow the silent years,
The seasons one by one;
How sweet to feel, each month that goes,
That life must soon be done!

O weary ways of earth and men!
O self more weary still!
How vainly do you vex the heart
That none but God can fill!

It is not weariness of life
That makes us wish to die;
But we are drawn by cords which come
From out eternity.

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard,
No heart of man can tell,
The store of joys God has prepared
For those who love Him well.

Oh, may those joys one day be ours,
Upon that happy shore!
And yet those joys are not enough—
We crave for something more.

The world's unkindness grows with life,
And troubles never cease;
'T were lawful then to wish to die,
Simply to be at peace.

Yes! peace is something more than joy,
Even the joys above;
For peace, of all created things,
Is likest Him we love.

But not for joy nor yet for peace,
Dare we desire to die;
God's will on earth is always joy,
Always tranquillity.

To die, that we might sin no more,
Were scarce a hero's prayer;
And glory grows as grace matures,
And patience loves to bear.

And yet we long and long to die,
We covet to be free,
Not for Thy great rewards, O God!
Not for Thy peace—but Thee.

But call not this a selfish love,
A turning from the fight;
And tell us not for others' sakes,
To doubt if this be right.

Digitized by Google

Ah, leave us, then, at peace, to greet
  Each waxing, waning moon,
Whose silver light seems aye to say—
  "Soon, exile spirit! soon."

THE THOUGHT OF GOD.

The thought of God, the thought of Thee,
  Who liest in my heart,
And yet beyond imagined space
  Outstretched and present art—

The thought of Thee, above, below,
  Around me and within,
Is more to me than health and wealth,
  Or love of kith and kin.

The thought of God is like the tree
  Beneath whose shade I lie,
And watch the flects of snowy clouds
  Sail o'er the silent sky.

'T is like that soft invading light,
  Which in all darkness shines,
The thread that through life's sombre web
  In golden pattern twines.

It is a thought which ever makes
  Life's sweetest smiles from tears,
And is a daybreak to our hopes,
  A sunset to our fears:

One while it bids the tears to flow,
  Then wipes them from the eyes,
Most often fills our souls with joy,
  And always sanctifies.

Within a thought so great, our souls
  Little and modest grow,
And, by its vastness awed, we learn
  The art of walking slow.

The wild flower on the mossy ground
  Scarce bends its pliant form,
When overhead the autumnal wood
  Is thundering like a storm.

So is it with our humbled souls
  Down in the thought of God,
Scarce conscious in their sober peace
  Of the wild storms abroad.

To think of Thee is almost prayer,
  And is outspoken praise;
And pain can even passive thoughts
  To actual worship raise.

O Lord! I live always in pain,
  My life's sad undersong,
Pain in itself not hard to bear,
  But hard to bear so long.

Little sometimes weighs more than much,
  When it has no relief;
A joyless life is worse to bear
  Than one of active grief.

And yet, O Lord! a suffering life
  One grand ascent may care;
Penance, not self-imposed, can make
  The whole of life a prayer.

All murmurs lie inside Thy Will
  Which are to Thee addressed;
To suffer for Thee is our work,
  To think of Thee our rest.

COME TO JESUS.

Souls of men! why will ye scatter
  Like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts! why will ye wander
  From a love so true and deep?

Was there ever kindest shepherd
  Half so gentle, half so sweet
As the Saviour who would have us
  Come and gather round His Feet?

It is God: His love looks mighty,
  But is mightier than it seems:
'T is our Father: and His fondness
  Goes far out beyond our dreams.

There 's a wideness in God's mercy,
  Like the wideness of the sea:
There 's a kindness in His justice,
  Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
  Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
  Have such kindly judgment given.

There is welcome for the sinner,
  And more graces for the good;
There is mercy with the Saviour;
  There is healing in His Blood.

There is grace enough for thousands
  Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
  In that upper home of bliss.

For the love of God is broader
  Than the measures of man's mind;
And the Heart of the Eternal
  Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow
  By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
  With a zeal He will not own.

There is plentiful redemption
  In the Blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
  In the sorrows of the Head.

'T is not all we owe to Jesus;
  It is something more than all;
Greater good because of evil,
  Larger mercy through the fall.

Pining Souls! come nearer Jesus,
  And, oh, come not doubting thus,
But with faith that trusts more bravely
  His huge tenderness for us.

Digitized by Google

If our love were but more simple,
  We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
  In the sweetness of our Lord.

THE GIFTS OF GOD.

My Soul! what hast thou done for God?
  Look o'er thy misspent years and see;
Sum up what thou hast done for God,
  And then what God hath done for thee.

He made thee when He might have made
  A soul that would have loved Him more:
He rescued thee from nothingness,
  And set thee on life's happy shore.

He placed an angel at thy side,
  And strewed joys round thee on thy way;
He gave thee rights thou couldst not claim,
  And life, free life, before thee lay.

Had God in heaven no work to do
  But miracles of love for thee?
No world to rule, no joy in Self,
  And in His own infinity?

So must it seem to our blind eyes:
  He gave His love no Sabbath rest,
Still plotting happiness for men,
  And new designs to make them blest.

From out His glorious Bosom came
  His only, His Eternal Son;
He freed the race of Satan's slaves,
  And with His Blood sin's captives won.

The world rose up against His love:
  New love the vile rebellion met,
As though God only looked at sin
  Its guilt to pardon and forget.

For His Eternal Spirit came
  To raise the thankless slaves to sons,
And with the sevenfold gifts of love
  To crown His own elected ones.

Men spurned His grace; their lips blasphemed
  The Love who made Himself their slave;
They grieved that blessed Comforter
  And turned against Him what He gave.

Yet still the sun is fair by day,
  The moon still beautiful by night;
The world goes round and joy with it,
  And life, free life, is men's delight.

No voice God's wondrous silence breaks,
  No hand put forth His anger tells;
But He, the Omnipotent and Dread,
  On high in humblest patience dwells.

The Son hath come; and maddened sin
  The world's Creator crucified;
The Spirit comes, and stays, while men
  His presence doubt, His gifts deride.

And now the Father keeps Himself,
  In patient and forbearing love,
To be His creature's heritage
  In that undying life above.

Oh wonderful, oh passing thought,
  The love that God hath had for thee,
Spending on thee no less a sum
  Than the Undivided Trinity!

Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost,
  Exhausted for a thing like this—
The world's whole government disposed
  For one ungrateful creature's bliss!

What hast thou done for God, my soul?
  Look o'er thy misspent years and see;
Cry from thy worse than nothingness,
  Cry for His mercy upon thee.

DISTRACTIONS IN PRAYER.

Ah, dearest Lord! I cannot pray,
  My fancy is not free;
Unmannerly distractions come,
  And force my thoughts from Thee.

The world that looks so dull all day
  Glows bright on me at prayer,
And plans that ask no thought but then
  Wake up and meet me there.

All Nature one full fountain seems
  Of dreamy sight and sound,
Which, when I kneel, breaks up its deeps,
  And makes a deluge round.

Old voices murmur in my ear,
  New hopes start into life,
And past and future gaily blend
  In one bewitching strife.

My very flesh has restless fits;
  My changeful limbs conspire
With all these phantoms of the mind
  My inner self to tire.

I cannot pray; yet, Lord! Thou know'st
  The pain it is to me
To have my vainly struggling thoughts
  Thus torn away from Thee.

Sweet Jesus! teach me how to prize
  These tedious hours when I,
Foolish and mute before Thy Face,
  In helpless worship lie.

Prayer was not meant for luxury,
  Or selfish pastime sweet;
It is the prostrate creature's place
  At his Creator's Feet.

Had I, dear Lord! no pleasure found
  But in the thought of Thee,
Prayer would have come unsought, and been
  A truer liberty.

Yet Thou art oft most present, Lord!
  In weak, distracted prayer:
A sinner out of heart with self
  Most often finds Thee there.

Digitized by Google

For prayer that humbles sets the soul
From all illusions free,
And teaches it how utterly,
Dear Lord! it hangs on Thee.

The heart, that on self-sacrifice
Is covetously bent,
Will bless Thy chastening hand that makes
Its prayer its punishment.

My Saviour! why should I complain,
And why fear aught but sin?
Distractions are but outward things;
Thy peace dwells far within.

These surface-troubles come and go,
Like ruffings of the sea;
The deeper depth is out of reach
To all, my God, but Thee.

THE OLD LABORER.

What end doth he fulfil?
He seems without a will,
Stupid, unhelpful, helpless, age-worn man!
He hath let the years pass;
He hath toiled and heard Mass,
Done what he could, and now does what he can.

And this forsooth is all!
A plant or animal
Hath a more positive work to do than he:
Along his daily beat,
Delighting in the heat,
He crawls in sunshine which he does not see.

What doth God get from him?
His very mind is dim,
Too weak to love, and too obtuse to fear.
Is there glory in his strife?
Is there meaning in his life?
Can God hold such a thing-like person dear?

Peace! he is dying now;
No light is on his brow;
He makes no sign, but without sign departs.
The poor die often so—
And yet they long to go,
To take to God their over-weighted hearts.

Born only to endure,
The patient passive poor
Seem useful chiefly by their multitude;
For they are men who keep
Their lives secret and deep;
Alas! the poor are seldom understood.

This laborer that is gone
Was childless and alone,
And homeless as his Saviour was before him;
He told in no man's ear
His longing, love, or fear,
Nor what he thought of life as it passed o'er him.

He had so long been old,
His heart was close and cold;
He had no love to take, no love to give:
Men almost wished him dead;
'T was best for him, they said;
'T was such a weary sight to see him live.

He walked with painful stoop,
As if life made him droop,
And care had fastened fetters round his feet;
He saw no bright blue sky,
Except what met his eye
Reflected from the rain-pools in the street.

To whom was he of good?
He slept and he took food,
He used the earth and air, and kindled fire:
He bore to take relief,
Less as a right than grief—
To what might such a soul as his aspire?

His inexpressive eye
Peered round him vacantly,
As if whate'er he did he would be chidden;
He seemed a mere growth of earth;
Yet even he had mirth,
As the great angels have, untold and hidden.

Alway his downcast eye
Was laughing silently,
As if he found some jubilee in thinking;
For his one thought was God,
In that one thought he abode,
For ever in that thought more deeply sinking.

Thus did he live his life,
A kind of passive strife,
Upon the God within his heart relying;
Men left him all alone,
Because he was unknown,
But he heard the angels sing when he was dying

God judges by a light
Which baffles mortal sight,
And the useless-seeming man the crown hath won:
In his vast world above,
A world of broader love,
God hath some grand employment for His son.

AUTUMN.

Autumn once more begins to teach;
Sere leaves their annual sermon preach;
And with the southward-slipping sun
Another stage of life is done.
The day is of a paler hue,
The night is of a darker blue,
Just as it was a year ago:
For time runs fast, but grace is slow!

Life glides away in many a bend,
In chapters which begin and end;
Each has its trial, each its grace,
Each in life's whole its proper place.
Life has its joinings and its breaks,
But each transition swiftly takes
Us nearer to or farther from
The threshold of our heavenly home.

Years pass away; new crosses come;
Past sorrow is a sort of home,
An exile's home, and only lent
For needful rest in banishment.
It narrows life, and walls it in,
And shuts the door on many a sin;

Digitized by Google

'T is almost like a calm fireside,
Where humbled hearts are fain to bide.

Thou comest, Autumn, to unlade
Thy wealthy freight of summer shade,
Still sorrowful as in past years,
Yet mild and sunny in thy tears,
Ripening and hardening all thy growth
Of solid wood, yet nothing loath
To waste upon the frolic breeze
Thy leaves, like flights of golden bees.

Have I laid by from summer hours
Ripe fruits as well as leaves and flowers?
Hath my past years a growth to harden,
As well as fewer sins to pardon?
Is God in all things more and more
A king within me than before?
I know not, yet one change hath come—
The world feels less and less a home.

My soul appears, as I get old,
More prompt in act, in prayer less cold;
Crosses, from use, more lightly.
Mirth is more purely weariness;
With less to quarrel with in life,
I grow less patient with its strife;
I wish more simply, Lord, to be,
Ailing or well, always with Thee!

DEEP GRIEF.

Days, weeks, and months have gone, O Lord!
They seemed both long and brief;
Yet darker still the darkness grows,
And deeper lies the grief.

They spoke of sorrow's laws and ways,
They said what time would do;
Wise-sounding words! yet have they been
Most bitterly untrue.

O Sorrow! 't is thy law to feed
On what should be relief;
O Time! of all things surely thou
Art cruelest to grief.

They tell me I am better now
That tears have past away,
Alas! those earlier days of tears
Were sunshine to to-day.

The mind was less afraid of self,
When sorrow's thoughts grew rank:
The sights and sounds of recent grief
Were better than this blank.

Old grief is worse than new: its pain
Is deeper in the heart;
The dull blind ache is worse to bear
Than blow, or wound, or smart.

Deeper and deeper in my soul
The weight of grief is stealing,
And, strange to say, I feel it more
When it has sunk past feeling.

O grief! when thou wert fresh and sharp,
Part of life felt thy blow;
But, grown the habit of my heart,
Thou art my whole life now.

Most sovereign when least sensible,
Most seen when out of sight,
Thou art the custom of the day,
And the haunting of the night.

Oh, that they would not comfort me!
Deep grief cannot be reached;
Wisdom to cure a broken heart,
Must not be wisdom preached.

Deep grief is better let alone;
Voices to it are swords;
A silent look will soothe it more
Than the tenderness of words.

Oh speak not! I will do my work,
Nay, more work than my share;
For to feel that it is idle grief
Is what deep grief cannot bear.

Deep grief is not a past event,
It is a life, a state,
Which habit makes more terrible,
And age more desolate.

But am I comfortless? Oh, no!
Jesus this pathway trod;
And deeper in my soul than grief
Art Thou, my dearest God!

Good is that darkening of our lives,
Which only God can brighten:
But better still that hopeless load,
Which none but God can lighten.

A CHILD'S DEATH.

Thou touchest us lightly, O God! in our grief;
But how rough is Thy touch in our prosperous hours!
All was bright, but Thou camest, so dreadful and brief,
Like a thunderbolt falling in gardens of flowers.

My children! My children! they clustered all round me,
Like a rampart which sorrow could never break through;
Each change in their beautiful lives only bound me
In a spell of delight which no care could undo.

But the eldest! O Father! how glorious he was,
With the soul looking out through his fountain-like eyes:
Thou lovest Thy Sole-born! And had I not cause
The treasure Thou gavest me, Father! to prize?

But the lily-bed lies beaten down by the rain,
And the tallest is gone from the place where he grew;

Digitized by Google

My tallest! my fairest! Oh, let me complain;
For all life is unroofed, and the tempests beat through.

I murmur not, Father! My will is with Thee;
I knew at the first, that my darling was Thine:
Hadst Thou taken him earlier, O Father—but see!
Thou hadst left him so long that I dreamed he was mine.

Thou hast taken the fairest: he was fairest to me;
Thou hast taken the fairest: 'tis always Thy way;
Thou hast taken the dearest: was he dearest to Thee?
Thou art welcome, thrice welcome:—yet woe is the day!

Thou hast honored my child by the speed of Thy choice,
Thou hast crowned him with glory, o'erwhelmed him with mirth:
He sings up in heaven with his sweet-sounding voice,
While I, a saint's mother, am weeping on earth.

Yet, oh for that voice, which is thrilling through heaven,
One moment my ears with its music to slake!
Oh, no! not for worlds would I have him regiven,
Yet I long to have back what I would not retake.

I grudge him, and grudge him not! Father! Thou knowest
The foolish confusions of innocent sorrow;
It is thus in Thy husbandry, Saviour! Thou sowest
The grief of to-day for the grace of to-morrow.

Thou art blooming in heaven, my Blossom, my Pride!
And thy beauty makes Jesus and Angels more glad:
Saints' mothers have sung when their eldest-born died,
Oh, why, my own saint! is thy mother so sad?

Go, go with thy God, with thy Saviour, my child!
Thou art His; I am His; and thy sisters are His:
But to-day thy fond mother with sorrow is wild!—
To think that her son is an angel in bliss!

Oh, forgive me, dear Saviour! on heaven's bright shore
Should I still in my child find a separate joy:
While I lie in the light of Thy Face evermore,
May I think heaven brighter because of my boy?

THE LAND BEYOND THE SEA.

The Land beyond the Sea!
When will life's task be o'er?
When shall we reach that soft blue shore,
O'er the dark strait whose billows foam and roar?
When shall we come to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea?

The Land beyond the Sea!
How close it often seems,
When flushed with evening's peaceful gleams;
And the wistful heart looks o'er the strait, and dreams!
It longs to fly to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Sometimes distinct and near
It grows upon the eye and ear,
And the gulf narrows to a threadlike mere;
We seem half-way to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Sometimes across the strait,
Like a drawbridge to a castle-gate,
The slanting sunbeams lie, and seem to wait
For us to pass to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Oh, how the lapsing years,
'Mid our not unsubmissive tears,
Have borne, now singly, now in fleets, the biers
Of those we love to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
How dark our present home!
By the dull beach and sullen foam
How wearily, how drearily we roam,
With arms outstretched to thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
When will our toil be done?
Slow-footed years! more swiftly run
Into the gold of that unsetting sun!
Homesick we are for thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Why fadest thou in light?
Why art thou better seen toward night?
Dear Land look always plain, look always bright,
That we may gaze on thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

The Land beyond the Sea!
Sweet is thine endless rest,
But sweeter far that Father's breast
Upon thy shores eternally possest;
For Jesus reigns o'er thee,
Calm Land beyond the Sea!

Digitized by Google

SAMUEL FERGUSON.

SAMUEL FERGUSON was born in Belfast, Ireland, about 1815. He was educated at the University of Dublin, and in 1838 was called to the Irish bar. He has since resided and practised his profession in Dublin. In 1865 he received the degree of LL. D. from his *alma mater*. He has written a great deal for the magazines, both prose and poetry, including the famous "Father Tom and the Pope," and has published in book form: "The Cromlech on Howth," a poem, 1861; and "Lays of the Western Gael, and other Poems," 1865.

THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR.

COME, see the Dolphin's anchor forged! 't is at a white heat now—
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased; though, on the forge's brow,
The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound;
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round;
All clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare—
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there.

The windlass strains the tackle-chains—the black mould heaves below;
And red and deep, a hundred veins burst out at every throe.
It rises, roars, rends all outright—O Vulcan, what a glow!
'T is blinding white, 't is blasting bright—the high sun shines not so!
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery, fearful show!
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy lurid row
Of smiths—that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe!
As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster slow
Sinks on the anvil—all about, the faces fiery grow:
"Hurrah!" they shout, "leap out, leap out!" bang, bang! the sledges go;
Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low;
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow;
The leathern mail rebounds the hail; the rattling cinders strew
The ground around; at every bound the sweltering fountains flow;
And, thick and loud, the swinking crowd at every stroke pant "Ho!"

Leap out, leap out, my masters! leap out, and lay on load!
Let 's forge a goodly anchor—a bower thick and broad;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode;
And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road—
The low reef roaring on her lea; the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea; the mainmast by the board;
The bulwarks down; the rudder gone; the boats stove at the chains;
But courage still, brave mariners—the bower yet remains!
And not an inch to flinch he deigns—save when ye pitch sky-high;
Then moves his head, as though he said, "Fear nothing—here am I!"

Swing in your strokes in order! let foot and hand keep time;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime.
But while ye swing your sledges, sing; and let the burden be,
The anchor is the anvil-king, and royal craftsmen we!
Strike in, strike in!—the sparks begin to dull their rustling red;
Our hammers ring with sharper din—our work will soon be sped;
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich array
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch of clay;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry craftsmen here
For the yeo-heave-o, and the heave-away, and the sighing seamen's cheer—
When, weighing slow, at eve they go, far, far from love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the ocean-foam.

Digitized by Google

In livid and obdurate gloom, he darkens down at last;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from cat was cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard! if thou hadst life like me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward beneath the deep green sea!
O deep sea-diver, who might then behold such sights as thou?—
The hoary monster's palaces!—Methinks what joy 't were now
To go plumb-plunging down, amid the assembly of the whales,
And feel the churned sea round me boil beneath their scourging tails!
Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea-unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellowing back, for all his ivory horn;
To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark, to laugh his jaws to scorn;
To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid Norwegian isles
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed miles—
Till, snorting like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far, astonished shoals
Of his back-browsing ocean-calves; or, haply, in a cove
Shell-strown, and consecrate of old to some Undine's love,
To find the long-haired mermaidens; or, hard by icy lands,
To wrestle with the sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-armed fisher of the deep! whose sports can equal thine?
The Dolphin weighs a thousand tons, that tugs thy cable-line;
And night by night 't is thy delight, thy glory day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white the giant game to play.
But, shamer of our little sports! forgive the name I gave:
A fisher's joy is to destroy—thine office is to save.
O lodger in the sea-king's halls! couldst thou but understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side—or who that dripping band,
Slow swaying in the heaving wave, that round about thee bend,
With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their ancient friend—
Oh, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger steps round thee,
Thine iron side would swell with pride—thou 'dst leap within the sea!

Give honor to their memories who left the pleasant strand
To shed their blood so freely for the love of fatherland—
Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy churchyard grave
So freely, for a restless bed amid the tossing wave!
Oh, though our anchor may not be all I have fondly sung,
Honor him for their memory whose bones he goes among!

THE FAIRY THORN.

"Get up, our Anna dear, from the weary spinning-wheel;
For your father 's on the hill, and your mother is asleep;
Come up above the crags, and we 'll dance a Highland reel
Around the fairy thorn on the steep."

At Anna Grace's door 't was thus the maidens cried,
Three merry maidens fair, in kirtles of the green;
And Anna laid the sock and the weary wheel aside,
The fairest of the four, I ween.

They 're glancing through the glimmer of the quiet eve,
Away in milky wavings of neck and ankle bare;
The heavy-sliding stream in its sleepy song they leave,
And the crags in the ghostly air;

And linking hand in hand, and singing as they go,
The maids along the hill-side have ta'en their fearless way,
Till they come to where the rowan-trees in lovely beauty grow
Beside the Fairy Hawthorn gray.

The hawthorn stands between the ashes tall and slim,
Like matron with her twin granddaughters at her knee;
The rowan-berries cluster o'er her low head gray and dim
In ruddy kisses sweet to see.

The merry maidens four have ranged them in a row,
Between each lovely couple a stately rowan-stem,
And away in mazes wavy like skimming birds they go,
Oh, never carolled bird like them!

But solemn is the silence of the silvery haze
That drinks away their voices in echoless repose,
And dreamily the evening has stilled the haunted braes,
And dreamier the gloaming grows.

Digitized by Google

And sinking one by one, like lark-notes from the sky
When the falcon's shadow saileth across the open shaw,
Are hushed the maidens' voices, as cowering down they lie
In the flutter of their sudden awe.

For, from the air above, and the grassy ground beneath,
And from the mountain-ashes and the old white thorn between,
A power of faint enchantment doth through their beings breathe,
And they sink down together on the green.

They sink together, silent, and stealing side by side,
They fling their lovely arms o'er their drooping necks so fair,
Then vainly strive again their naked arms to hide,
For their shrinking necks again are bare.

Thus clasped and prostrate all, with their heads together bowed,
Soft o'er their bosoms beating—the only human sound—
They hear the silky footsteps of the silent fairy crowd,
Like a river in the air, gliding round.

Nor scream can any raise, nor prayer can any say,
But wild, wild, the terror of the speechless three,
For they feel fair Anna Grace drawn silently away,
By whom they dare not look to see.

They feel their tresses twine with her parting locks of gold,
And the curls elastic falling, as her head withdraws;
They feel her sliding arms from their trancèd arms unfold,
But they dare not look to see the cause:

For heavy on their senses the faint enchantment lies
Through all that night of anguish and perilous amaze;
And neither fear nor wonder can ope their quivering eyes
Or their limbs from the cold ground raise.

Till out of night the earth has rolled her dewy side,
With every haunted mountain and streamy vale below;
When, as the mist dissolves in the yellow morning-tide,
The maidens' trance dissolveth so.

Then fly the ghastly three as swiftly as they may,
And tell their tale of sorrow to anxious friends in vain—
They pined away and died within the year and day,
And ne'er was Anna Grace seen again.

THE PRETTY GIRL OF LOCH DAN.

The shades of eve had crossed the glen
That frowns o'er infant Avonmore,
When, nigh Loch Dan, two weary men,
We stopped before a cottage-door.

"God save all here," my comrade cries,
And rattles on the raised latch-pin;
"God save you kindly," quick replies
A clear sweet voice, and asks us in.

We enter; from the wheel she starts,
A rosy girl with soft black eyes;
Her fluttering court'sy takes our hearts,
Her blushing grace and pleased surprise.

Poor Mary, she was quite alone,
For, all the way to Glenmalure,
Her mother had that morning gone,
And left the house in charge with her.

But neither household cares, nor yet
The shame that startled virgins feel,
Could make the generous girl forget
Her wonted hospitable zeal.

She brought us in a beechen bowl
Sweet milk that smacked of mountain-thyme,
Oat-cake, and such a yellow roll
Of butter—it gilds all my rhyme!

And, while we ate the grateful food
(With weary limbs on bench reclined),
Considerate and discreet, she stood
Apart, and listened to the wind.

Kind wishes both our souls engaged,
From breast to breast spontaneous ran
The mutual thought—we stood and pledged
The modest rose above Loch Dan.

"The milk we drink is not more pure,
Sweet Mary—bless those budding charms!—
Than your own generous heart, I 'm sure,
Nor whiter than the breast it warms!"

She turned and gazed, unused to hear
Such language in that homely glen;
But, Mary, you have naught to fear,
Though smiled on by two stranger-men.

Not for a crown would I alarm
Your virgin pride by word or sign,
Nor need a painful blush disarm
My friend of thoughts as pure as mine.

Her simple heart could not but feel
The words we spoke were free from guile;
She stooped, she blushed, she fixed her wheel—
'T is all in vain—she can't but smile!

Just like sweet April's dawn appears
Her modest face—I see it yet—
And though I lived a hundred years
Methinks I never could forget

Digitized by Google

The pleasure that, despite her heart,
Fills all her downcast eyes with light,
The lips reluctantly apart,
The white teeth struggling into sight,

The dimples eddying o'er her cheek—
The rosy cheek that won't be still;—
Oh, who could blame what flatterers speak,
Did smiles like this reward their skill?

For such another smile, I vow,
Though loudly beats the midnight rain,
I 'd take the mountain-side e'en now,
And walk to Luggelaw again!

TIMOLEAGUE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE IRISH.

Lone and weary as I wandered by the bleak shore of the sea,
Meditating and reflecting on the world's hard destiny,
Forth the moon and stars 'gan glimmer, in the quiet tide beneath,
For on slumbering spring and blossom breathed not out of heaven a breath.

On I went in sad dejection, careless where my footsteps bore,
Till a ruined church before me opened wide its ancient door—
Till I stood before the portals, where of old were wont to be,
For the blind, the halt, and leper, alms and hospitality.

Still the ancient seat was standing, built against the buttress gray,
Where the clergy used to welcome weary travellers on their way;
There I sat me down in sadness, 'neath my cheek I placed my hand,
Till the tears fell hot and briny down upon the grassy land.

There, I said in woful sorrow, weeping bitterly the while,
Was a time when joy and gladness reigned within this ruined pile;—
Was a time when bells were tinkling, clergy preaching peace abroad,
Psalms a-singing, music ringing praises to the mighty God.

Empty aisle, deserted chancel, tower tottering to your fall,
Many a storm since then has beaten on the gray head of your wall!
Many a bitter storm and tempest has your roof-tree turned away,
Since you first were formed a temple to the Lord of night and day.

Holy house of ivied gables, that were once the country's boast,
Houseless now in weary wandering are you scattered, saintly host;
Lone you are to-day, and dismal—joyful psalms no more are heard.
Where, within your choir, her vesper screeches the cat-headed bird.

Ivy from your eaves is growing, nettles round your green hearthstone,
Winds howl where, in your corners, dropping waters make their moan,
Where the lark to early matins used their clergy forth to call,
There, alas! no tongue is stirring, save the daws upon the wall.

Refectory cold and empty, dormitory bleak and bare,
Where are now your pious uses, simple bed and frugal fare?
Gone your abbot, rule and order, broken down your altar-stones;
Naught I see beneath your shelter, save a heap of clayey bones.

Oh! the hardship—oh! the hatred, tyranny, and cruel war,
Persecution and oppression that have left you as you are!
I myself once also prospered:—mine is, too, an altered plight;
Trouble, care, and age, have left me good for naught but grief to-night.

Gone, my motion and my vigor—gone, the use of eye and ear;
At my feet lie friends and children, powerless and corrupting here;
Woe is written on my visage, in a nut my heart would lie—
Death's deliverance were welcome—Father, let the old man die.

BOATMAN'S HYMN.

Bark that bears me thro' from foam and squall,
You in the storm are my castle-wall:
Tho' the sea should redden from bottom to top,
From tiller to mast she takes no drop.
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
Wherry aroon, my land and store!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
She is the boat can sail galore.

She dresses herself, and goes gliding on,
Like a dame in her robes of the Indian lawn;
For God has blessed her, gunnel and whale,
And oh, if you saw her stretch out to the gale!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
Wherry aroon, my land and store!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
She is the boat can sail galore.

Whillan, ahoy! old heart of stone,
Stooping so black o'er the beach alone,
Answer me well: on the bursting brine
Saw you ever a bark like mine?
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
Wherry aroon, my land and store!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
She is the boat can sail galore.

Digitized by Google

Says Whillan: "Since first I was made of stone,
I have looked abroad o'er the beach alone,
But till to-day, on the bursting brine,
Saw I never a bark like thine."
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
Wherry aroon, my land and store!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
She is the boat can sail galore.

"God of the air," the seamen shout,
When they see us tossing the brine about,
"Give us the shelter of strand or rock,
Or through and through us she goes with a shock!"
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
Wherry aroon, my land and store!
On the tide-top, the tide-top,
She is the boat can sail galore.

LAMENT FOR THE SONS OF USNACH.

The lions of the hill are gone,
And I am left alone—alone—
Dig the grave both wide and deep,
For I am sick, and fain would sleep!

The falcons of the wood are flown,
And I am left alone—alone—
Dig the grave both deep and wide,
And let us slumber side by side.

The dragons of the rock are sleeping,
Sleep that wakes not for our weeping;
Dig the grave, and make it ready,
Lay me on my true-love's body.

Lay their spears and bucklers bright
By the warriors' sides aright;
Many a day the three before me
On their linked bucklers bore me.

Lay upon the low grave-floor,
'Neath each head, the blue claymore,
Many a time the noble three
Reddened these blue blades for me.

Lay the collars, as is meet,
Of their greyhounds at their feet;
Many a time for me have they
Brought the tall red deer to bay.

In the falcon's jesses throw,
Hook and arrow, line and bow;
Ne'er again, by stream or plain,
Shall the gentle woodsmen go.

Sweet companions, ye were ever—
Harsh to me, your sister, never:
Woods and wilds, and misty valleys,
Were with you as good 's a palace.

Oh! to hear my true-love singing,
Sweet as sound of trumpets ringing:
Like the sway of ocean swelling
Rolled his deep voice round our dwelling.

Oh! to hear the echoes pealing
Round our green and fairy sheeling,
When the three, with soaring chorus,
Passed the silent skylark o'er us.

Echo now, sleep, morn and even—
Lark alone enchant the heaven!—
Ardan's lips are scant of breath,
Naisi's tongue is cold in death.

Stag, exult on glen and mountain—
Salmon, leap from loch to fountain—
Heron, in the free air warm ye—
Usnach's sons no more will harm ye!

Erin's stay no more you are,
Rulers of the ridge of war!
Never more 't will be your fate
To keep the beam of battle straight!

Woe is me! by fraud and wrong,
Traitors false and tyrants strong,
Fell clan Uncach, bought and sold,
For Barach's feast and Conor's gold!

Woe to Eman, roof and wall!—
Woe to Red Branch, hearth and hall!—
Tenfold woe and black dishonor
To the foul and false clan Conor!

Dig the grave both wide and deep,
Sick I am, and fain would sleep!
Dig the grave and make it ready,
Lay me on my true-love's body!

DRIMIN DHU.

A JACOBITE RELIC.—TRANSLATED FROM THE IRISH.

Ah, Drimin Dhu deelish, a pride of the flow,
Ah, where are your folks, are they living or no?
They 're down in the ground, 'neath the sod lying low,
Expecting King James with the crown on his brow.

But if I could get sight of the crown on his brow,
By night and day travelling to London I 'd go;
Over mountains of mist and soft masses below,
Till I 'd beat on the kettle-drums, Drimin Dhubh, O!

Welcome home, welcome home, Drimin Dhubh, O!
Good was your sweet milk, for drinking, I trow;
With your face like a rose, and your dew-lap of snow,
I 'll part from you never, oh, Drimin Dhubh, O!

Digitized by Google

ELIZA COOK.

ELIZA COOK was born in 1817, in London, where her father was a small tradesman. In 1837 she began to write for periodicals, and in 1840 she published her first volume, entitled "Melaia, and other Poems." In 1849 she began to edit "Eliza Cook's Journal," a weekly "designed to aid the gigantic struggle for intellectual elevation now going on." Ill health compelled her to discontinue it in 1854. In 1864 a pension of £100 was granted to her, and in that year also she published "New Echoes, and other Poems." A complete edition of her poems appeared in 1869. She excels as a writer of homely songs. Many of these were set to music by Henry Russell, and some—notably "The Old Arm-Chair"—have enjoyed a world-wide popularity, and seem to be quite as immortal as much more poetical poetry.

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR.

I LOVE it, I love it! and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair?
I've treasured it long as a sainted prize,
I've bedewed it with tears, I've embalmed it with sighs.
'T is bound by a thousand bands to my heart;
Not a tie will break, not a link will start;
Would you know the spell?—a mother sat there!
And a sacred thing is that old arm-chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallowed seat with listening ear;
And gentle words that mother would give
To fit me to die and teach me to live.
She told me that shame would never betide
With Truth for my creed, and God for my guide;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer,
As I knelt beside that old arm-chair.

I sat, and watched her many a day,
When her eye grew dim, and her locks were gray;
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on, but the last one sped—
My idol was shattered, my earth-star fled!
I learned how much the heart can bear,
When I saw her die in her old arm chair.

'T is past, 't is past! but I gaze on it now,
With quivering breath and throbbing brow:
'T was there she nursed me, 't was there she died,
And memory flows with lava-tide.
Say it is folly, and deem me weak,
While scalding drops start down my cheek;
But I love it, I love it, and cannot tear
My soul from a mother's old arm-chair.

HANG UP HIS HARP.

HIS young bride stood beside his bed,
Her weeping watch to keep;
Hush! hush! he stirred not,—was he dead,
Or did he only sleep?

His brow was calm, no change was there,
No sigh had filled his breath;
Oh, did he wear that smile so fair
In slumber or in death?

"Reach down his harp," she wildly cried,
"And if one spark remain,
Let him but hear 'Loch Erroch's side;'
He 'll kindle at the strain.

"That tune e'er held his soul in thrall;
It never breathed in vain;
He 'll waken as its echoes fall,
Or never wake again."

The strings were swept. 'T was sad to hear
Sweet music floating there;
For every note called forth a tear
Of anguish and despair.

"See! see!" she cried, "the tune is o'er—
No opening eye, no breath;
Hang up his harp; he 'll wake no more;
He sleeps the sleep of death."

THE ENGLISHMAN.

THERE 's a land that bears a world-known name,
Though it is but a little spot;
I say 't is first on the scroll of fame,
And who shall aver it is not?
Of the deathless ones who shine and live
In arms, in arts, or song,
The brightest the whole wide world can give
To that little land belong.

Digitized by Google

'T is the star of earth, deny it who can,
The island home of an Englishman.

There 's a flag that waves o'er every sea,
No matter when or where;
And to treat that flag as aught but the free
Is more than the strongest dare.
For the lion spirits that tread the deck
Have carried the palm of the brave;
And that flag *may* sink with a shot-torn wreck,
But never float over a slave.
Its honor is stainless, deny it who can,
And this is the flag of an Englishman.

There 's a heart that leaps with burning glow
The wronged and the weak to defend;
And strikes as soon for a trampled foe
As it does for a soul-bound friend.
It nurtures a deep and honest love,
The passions of faith and pride,
And yearns with the fondness of a dove
For the light of its own fireside.
'T is a rich, rough gem, deny it who can,
And this is the heart of an Englishman.

The Briton may traverse the pole or the zone,
And boldly claim his right;
For he calls such a vast domain his own
That the sun never sets on his might.
Let the haughty stranger seek to know
The place of his home and birth,
And a flush will pour from cheek to brow
While he tells his native earth.
For a glorious charter, deny it who can,
Is breathed in the words "I 'm an Englishman."

THERE 'S A STAR IN THE WEST.

There 's a star in the West that shall never go down
Till the records of valor decay;
We must worship its light, though it is not our own,
For Liberty burst in its ray.
Shall the name of a Washington ever be heard
By a freeman, and thrill not his breast?
Is there one out of bondage that hails not the word,
As the Bethlehem Star of the West?

"War, war to the knife! be enthralled or ye die,"
Was the echo that woke in his land;
But it was not *his* voice that promoted the cry,
Nor *his* madness that kindled the brand.
He raised not his arm, he defied not his foes,
While a leaf of the olive remained,
Till, goaded with insult, his spirit arose,
Like a long-baited lion unchained.

He struck with firm courage the blows of the brave,
But sighed o'er the carnage that spread;
He indignantly trampled the yoke of the slave,
But wept for the thousands that bled.
Though he threw back the fetters and headed the strife,
Till Man's charter was fairly restored,
Yet he prayed for the moment when Freedom and Life
Would no longer be pressed by the sword.

Oh, his laurels were pure, and his patriot name
In the page of the future shall dwell,
And be seen in all annals, the foremost in fame,
By the side of a Hofer and Tell.
The truthful and honest, the wise and the good,
Among Britons have nobly confessed
That his was the glory and ours was the blood
Of the deeply-stained field of the West.

IT IS THE SONG MY MOTHER SINGS.

It is the song my mother sings,
And gladly do I list the strain;
I never hear it but it brings
The wish to hear it sung again.
She breathed it to me long ago,
To lull me to my baby rest;
And as she murmured soft and low,
I slept in peace upon her breast.
O gentle song, thou hast a throng
Of angel-tones within thy spell;
I feel that I shall love thee long,
And fear I love thee far too well.

For though I turn to hear thee now,
With doting glance of warm delight,
In after-years I know not how
Thy plaintive notes may dim my sight.
That mother's voice will then be still;
I hear it falter day by day—
It soundeth like a fountain-rill
That trembles ere it cease to play.
And then this heart, thou simple song,
Will find an anguish in thy spell;
'T will wish it could not love so long,
Or had not loved thee half so well.

WEDDING-BELLS.

Twilight shade is calmly falling
Round about the dew-robed flowers;
Philomel's lone song is calling
Lovers to their fairy bowers;
Echo, on the zephyrs gliding,
Bears a voice that seems to say,
"Ears and hearts, come list my tiding;
This has been a wedding-day!"
Hark! the merry chimes are pealing,
Soft and glad the music swells;
Gaily on the night-wind stealing,
Sweetly sound the wedding-bells.

Every simple breast rejoices;
Laughter rides upon the gale;
Happy hearts and happy voices
Dwell within the lowly vale.
Oh, how sweet, on zephyrs gliding,
Sound the bells that seem to say,
"Ears and hearts, come list my tiding;
This has been a wedding-day!"
Hark! the merry chimes are pealing,
Soft and glad the music swells;
Gaily on the night-wind stealing,
Sweetly sound the wedding-bells.

Digitized by Google

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH was born in Liverpool, January 1, 1819. In early youth he came to the United States with his father, who was called hither by business. In 1828 he was sent to school at Rugby, where he soon became noted for his scholarship, and was one of the best contributors to the "Rugby Magazine." In due time he entered Oxford, where he gained a scholarship, and afterward a fellowship. There he wrote "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, a Long-vacation Pastoral," published in 1848. In that year he gave up his fellowship, and travelled on the Continent.

After his return to England he was appointed principal of University Hall, and Professor of English Literature, in University College, London. He resigned his professorship in 1852, and removed to Cambridge, Mass., where he spent a year as a private tutor. In 1853 he went home, was appointed to a place in the Education Department of the Privy Council, settled in London, and married. He worked very hard at the duties of his office for eight years, when his health gave way, and he made a tour on the Continent, hoping to restore it, but he died in Florence, Italy, November 13, 1861.

He had published in 1859 a revision of Dryden's translation of Plutarch. His "Amours de Voyage," a narrative poem, appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly" in 1858, and a collection of his poems, with a memoir by Charles Eliot Norton, was published in Boston in 1862. His widow has edited his complete works, with a life and a portrait (London, 1869).

MARI MAGNO:

OR, TALES ON BOARD.

I.

A YOUTH was I, an elder friend with me,
'T was in September o'er the autumnal sea
We went, the wild Atlantic Ocean o'er,
Two among many the strong steamer bore.
Delight it was to feel that wondrous force
That held us steady to our purposed course,
The burning, resolute, victorious will,
'Gainst winds and waves that strive unwavering still;
Delight it was with each returning day
To learn the ship had won upon her way
Her sum of miles—delight were mornings gray
And gorgeous eves—nor was it less delight,
On each more temperate and favoring night,
Friend with familiar or with new-found friend,
To pace the deck, and o'er the bulwarks bend,
And the night-watches in long converse spend,
While still new subjects and new thoughts would rise
Amid the silence of the seas and skies.
Among the mingled multitude, a few,
Some three or four, toward us early drew;
We proved each other with a day or two.
Night after night some three or four we walked,
And talked, and talked, and infinitely talked.
Of the New England ancient blood was one;
His youthful spurs in letters he had won,
Unspoilt by that to Europe late had come—
Hope long deferred—and went, unspoilt by Europe, home.
What racy tales of Yankee-land he had!
Up-country girl, up-country farmer lad,
The regnant clergy of the time of old,
In wig and gown—tales not to be retold
By me; I could but spoil were I to tell;
Himself must do it, who can do it well.
An English clergyman came, spick and span,
In black and white—a large, well-favored man,
Fifty years old, as near as one could guess;
He looked the dignitary more or less.
A rural dean, I said, he was, at least,
Canon, perhaps; at many a good man's feast
A guest had been among the choicest there.
Manly his voice, and manly was his air;
At the first sight you felt he had not known
The things pertaining to his cloth alone;
Chairman of the Quarter Sessions had he been?
Serious and calm, 't was plain he much had seen,
Had miscellaneous, large experience had
Of human acts, good, half and half, and bad.
Serious and calm, yet lurked, I know not why,
At times a softness in his voice and eye.
Some shade of ill a prosperous life had crossed;
Married no doubt; a wife or child had lost?
He never told us why he crossed the sea.
My guardian friend was now, at thirty-three,
A rising lawyer—ever, at the best,
Slow rises worth in lawyer's gown compressed—
Succeeding now, yet just and only just,
His new success he never seemed to trust.
By nature he to gentlest thoughts inclined,
To most severe had disciplined his mind.
He held it duty to be half unkind;
Bitter, they said who but the exterior knew.
In friendship never was a friend so true;

Digitized by Google

The unwelcome fact he did not shrink to tell,
The good, if fact, he recognized as well,
Stout to maintain, if not the first to see.
In conversation who so great as he?
Leading but seldom, always sure to guide;
To false or silly if 't was borne aside,
His quick correction silent he expressed, [best.
And stopped you short, and forced you to your
Often, I think, he suffered from some pain
Of mind, that on the body worked again·
One felt it in his sort of half disdain,
Impatient not, but acrid in his speech:
The world with him her lesson failed to teach—
To take things easily, and let them go.
He, for what special fitness I scarce know,
For which good quality, or if for all,
With less of reservation and recall
And speedier favor than I e'er had seen,
Took, as we called him, to the rural dean.
As grew the gourd, as grew the stalk of bean,
So swift it seemed betwixt these differing two
A stately trunk of confidence upgrew.
Of marriage long one night they held discourse,
Regarding it in different ways, of course.
Marriage is discipline, the wise had said,
A needful human discipline to wed;
Novels of course depict it final bliss,
Say, had it ever really once been this?
Our Yankee friend (whom, ere the night was done,
We called New England or the Pilgrim Son),
A little tired, made bold to interfere.
"Appeal," he said, "to me: my sentence hear.
You 'll reason on till night and reason fail;
My judgment is you each shall tell a tale.
And as on marriage you cannot agree,
Of love and marriage let the stories be."
Sentence delivered, as the younger man,
My lawyer-friend was called on, and began.

THE LAWYER'S TALE.

LOVE IS FELLOW-SERVICE.

A YOUTH and maid upon a summer night,
Upon the lawn, while yet the skies were light—
Edmund and Emma, let their names be these—
Among the shrubs, within the circling trees,
Joined in a game with boys and girls at play.
For games perhaps too old a little they:
In April she her eighteenth year begun,
And twenty he, and near to twenty-one.
A game it was of running and of noise,
He as a boy with other girls and boys
(Her sisters and her brothers) took the fun;
And when her turn, she marked not, came to run,
"Emma!" he called, then knew that he was wrong,
Knew that her name to him did not belong.
Her look and manner proved his feeling true;
A child no more, her womanhood she knew:
Half was the color mounted on her face,
Her tardy movement had an adult grace.
Vexed with himself, and shamed, he felt the more
A kind of joy he ne'er had felt before;
'T was beautiful with her to be a man:
Something there was that from this date began.

Two years elapsed, and he who went and came,
Changing in much, in this appeared the same;
The feeling, if it did not greatly grow,
Endured, and was not wholly hid below;
He now o'ertasked at school, a serious boy,
A sort of after-boyhood to enjoy
Appeared—in vigor and in spirit high
And manly grown, but kept the boy's soft eye,
And full of blood, and strong and light of limb,
To him 't was pleasure now to ride, to swim;
The peaks, the glens, the torrents tempted him.
Restless he seemed, long distances would walk,
And lively was and vehement in talk.
A wandering life his life had lately been;
Books he had read, the world had little seen.
One native frailty haunted him—a touch
Of something introspective overmuch.
With all his eager motions still there went
A self-correcting and ascetic bent,
That from the obvious good still led astray,
And set him travelling on the longest way—
Seen in these scattered notes, their date that claim
When first his feeling, conscious, sought a name.
"Beside the wishing-gate which so they name,
'Mid Northern hills, to me this fancy came;
A wish I formed, my wish I thus expressed:
Would I could wish my wishes all to rest,
And know to wish the wish that were the best!
O for some winnowing wind, to the empty air
This chaff of easy sympathies to bear
Far off, and leave me of myself aware!
While thus this over-health deludes me still,
So willing that I know not what I will,
O for some friend, or more than friend, austere,
To make me know myself and make me fear!
O for some touch too noble to be kind,
To awake to life the mind within the mind!"

"O charms, seductions, and divine delights
All through the radiant yellow summer nights,
Dreams hardly dreams, that yield or e'er they're done
To the bright fact, my day, my risen sun!
O promise and fulfilment, both in one!
O bliss already bliss which naught hath shared,
Whose glory no fruition has impaired!
And emblem of my state, thou coming day,
With all thy hours unspent to pass away,
Why do I wait? what more propose to know?
Where the sweet mandate bids me, let me go.
My conscience in my impulse let me find,
Justification in the moving mind,
Law in the strong desire; or yet behind
Say is there aught the spell that has not heard—
A something that refuses to be stirred?"

"In other regions has my being heard
Of a strange language the diviner word?
Has some forgotten life the exemplar shown?
Elsewhere such high communion have I known
As dooms me here, in this, to live alone?
Then love, that shouldest blind me, let me, love,
Nothing behold beyond thee or above:
Ye impulses that should be strong and wild,
Beguile me, if I am to be beguiled!
Or are there modes of love, and different kinds,
Proportioned to the sizes of our minds?
There are who say thus. I held there was one,
One love, one Deity, one central sun;
As he resistless brings the expanding day,
So love should come on his victorious way.

Digitized by Google

If light at all, can light indeed be there,
Yet only permeate half the ambient air?
Can the high noon be regnant in the sky,
Yet half the land in light and half in darkness lie?
Can love, if love, be occupant in part,
Hold, as it were, some chambers in the heart—
Tenant at will of so much of the soul,
Not lord and mighty master of the whole?
There are who say, and say that it is well:
Opinion all; of knowledge none can tell."

"Montaigne, I know, in a realm high above
Places the seat of friendship over love:
'T is not in love that we should think to find
The lofty fellowship of mind with mind;
Love 's not a joy where soul and soul unite,
Rather a wondrous animal delight;
And as in spring for one consummate hour
The world of vegetation turns to flower,
The birds with liveliest plumage trim their wing,
And all the woodland listens as they sing,
When spring is o'er and summer days are sped,
The songs are silent and the blossoms dead;
E'en so of man and woman is the bliss.
O but I will not tamely yield to this!
I think it only shows us in the end,
Montaigne was happy in a noble friend,
Had not the fortune of a noble wife;
He lived, I think, a poor, ignoble life,
And wrote of petty pleasures, petty pain:
I do not greatly think about Montaigne."

"How charming to be with her! Yet, indeed,
After a while I find a blank succeed:
After a while she little has to say;
I 'm silent too, although I wish to stay.
What would it be all day, day after day?
Ah, but I ask, I do not doubt, too much;
I think of love as if it should be such
As to fulfil and occupy in whole
The naught-else-seeking, naught-essaying soul.
Yet such a change, so entire I feel 't would be,
So potent, so omnipotent with me,
My former self I never should recall—
Indeed, I think it must be all in all."

"I thought that Love was winged; without a sound
His purple pinions bore him o'er the ground;
Wafted without an effort here or there
He came—and we too trod as if in air:
But panting, toiling, clambering up the hill,
Am I to assist him? I put forth my will
To upbear his lagging footsteps, lame and slow,
And help him on and tell him where to go,
And ease him of his quiver and his bow?"

"Erotion! I saw it in a book:
Why did I notice it, why did I look?
Yea, is it so, ye powers that see above?
I do not love, I want, I try to love!
This is not love, but lack of love instead.
Merciless thought! I would I had been dead,
Or e'er the phrase had come into my head."

She also wrote; and here may find a place
Of her and of her thoughts some slender trace:

"He is not vain; if proud, he quells his pride,
And somehow really likes to be defied;
Rejoices if you humble him: indeed,
Gives way at once, and leaves you to succeed.

"Easy it were with such a mind to play,
And foolish not to do so, some would say;
One almost smiles to look and see the way:
But come what will, I will not play a part;
Indeed, I dare not condescend to art.

"Easy 't were not, perhaps, with him to live;
He looks for more than any one can give:
So dulled at times and disappointed; still
Expecting what depends not of my will:
My inspiration comes not at my call;
Seek me as I am, if seek you do at all."

"Like him I do, and think of him I must;
But more—I dare not and I cannot trust.
This more he brings—say, is it more or less
Than that which fruitage never came to bless,
The old wild-flower of love-in-idleness?

"Me when he leaves, and others when he sees,
What is my fate, who am not there to please?
Me he has left; already may have seen
One who for me forgotten here has been,
And he, the while, is balancing between.
If the heart spoke, the heart I know were bound:
What if it utter an uncertain sound?

"Absence were hard; yet let the trial be,
His nature's aim and purpose he would free,
And in the world his course of action see.
O should he lose, not learn—pervert his scope!
O should I lose! and yet to win I hope.
I win not now; his way if now I went,
Brief joy I gave, for years of discontent."

"Gone, is it true? but oft he went before,
And came again before a month was o'er.
Gone. Though I could not venture upon art,
It was, perhaps, a foolish pride in part;
He had such ready fancies in his head,
And really was so easy to be led;
One might have failed, and yet I feel 't was pride,
And can't but half repent I never tried.
Gone, is it true? but he again will come:
Wandering he loves, and loves returning home."

Gone, it was true; nor came so soon again;
Came, after travelling, pleasure half, half pain;
Came, but a half of Europe first o'erran;
Came, found his father was a ruined man.
Rich they had been, and rich was Emma too,
Heiress of wealth she knew not, Edmund knew.
Farewell to her!—In a new home obscure,
Food for his helpless parents to secure,
From early morning to advancing dark
He toiled and labored as a merchant's clerk.
Three years his heavy load he bore, nor quailed,
Then all his health, though scarce his spirit, failed;
Friends interposed, insisted it must be,
Enforced their help, and sent him to the sea.

Digitized by Google

Wandering about, with little here to do,
His old thoughts mingling dimly with his new,
Wandering one morn, he met upon the shore,
Her whom he quitted five long years before.
Alas! why quitted? Say that charms are naught,
Nor grace, nor beauty worth one serious thought;
Was there no mystic virtue in the sense
That joined your boyish, girlish innocence?
Is constancy a thing to throw away,
And loving faithfulness a chance of every day?
Alas! why quitted? Is she changed? But now
The weight of intellect is in her brow;
Changed, or but truer seen, one sees in her
Something to wake the soul, the interior sense to stir.

Alone they met, from alien eyes away:
The high shore hid them in a tiny bay.
Alone was he, was she; in sweet surprise
They met, before they knew it, in their eyes;
In his, a wondering admiration glowed,
In hers, a world of tenderness o'erflowed.
In a brief moment all was known and seen
That of slow years the wearying work had been:
Morn's early, odorous breath perchance, in sooth,
Awoke the old natural feeling of their youth;
The sea perchance and solitude had charms.
They met—I know not—in each other's arms.
Why linger now—why waste the sands of life?
A few sweet weeks and they were man and wife.
To his old frailty do not be severe,
His latest theory with patience hear:

"I sought not, truly, would to seek disdain,
A kind, soft pillow for a wearying pain,
Fatigues and cares to lighten, to relieve:
Yet love is fellow-service, I believe.

"No, truly no, it was not to obtain,
Though that perchance were happiness, were gain,
A tender breast to fall upon and weep,
A heart the secrets of my heart to keep,
To share my hopes and in my griefs to grieve:
Yet love is fellow-service, I believe.

"Yet in the eye of life's all-seeing sun
We shall behold a something we have done,
Shall, of the work together we have wrought,
Beyond our aspiration and our thought,
Some not unworthy issue yet receive—
For love is fellow-service, I believe."

II.

The tale, we said, instructive was, but short;
Could he not give another of the sort?
He feared his second might his first repeat,
And Aristotle teaches, change is sweet.
"But come, our younger friend in this dim night
Under his bushel must not hide his light.
Elders forget what younger know too well,
And he has doubtless much that he can tell."
I said I'd had but little time to live,
Experience none or confidence could give.
"But I can tell to-morrow, if you please,
My last year's journey toward the Pyrenees."
To-morrow came—and evening, when it closed,
The penalty of speech on me imposed.

MY TALE.

A LA BANQUETTE; OR, A MODERN PILGRIMAGE.

I waited at La Quenille, ten miles or more
From the old Roman sources of Mont Dore;
Travellers to Tulle this way are forced to go,
An old high-road from Lyons to Bordeaux.
From Tulle to Brives the swift Corrèze descends,
At Brives you 've railway, and your trouble ends.
A little *bourg* La Quenille: and from the height
The mountains of Auvergne are all in sight—
Green pastoral heights, that once in lava flowed,
Of primal fire the product and abode—
And all the plateaus, and the lines that trace
Where in deep dells the waters find their place.
Far to the south, above the lofty plain,
The Plomb de Cantal lifts his towering train.
A little after one, with little fail,
Down drove the diligence that bears the mail,
The *courier* therefore called, in whose *banquette*
A place I got, and thankful was to get:
The new postilion climbed his seat, *Allez!*
Off broke the four cart-horses on the way:
Westward we roll o'er heathy backs of hills,
Crossing the future rivers in the rills;
Bare table-lands are these, and sparsely sown,
Turning their waters south to the Dordogne.
Close-packed we were, and little at our ease,
The *conducteur* impatient with the squeeze;
Not tall he seemed, but bulky round about,
His cap and jacket made him look more stout.
In *grande tenue* he rode of *conducteur*.
Black eyes he had, black his moustaches were,
Shaven his chin, his hair and whiskers cropped;
A ready man; at Ussel, when we stopped,
For me and for himself bread, meat, and wine
He got—the *courier* did not wait to dine;
To appease our hunger and allay our drouth,
We ate and took the bottle at the mouth;
One draught I had, the rest entire had he,
For wine his body had capacity.
A peasant in his country blouse was there:
He told me of the *Conseil* and the *Maire*.
Their *Maire*, he said, could neither write nor read,
And yet could keep the registers, indeed;
The *Conseil* had resigned—I know not what—
Good actions here are easily forgot:
He in the *quarante-huit* had something done,
Were things but fair, some notice should have won.
Another youth there was, a soldier he,
A soldier ceasing with to-day to be;
Three years had served, for three had bought release,
From war returning to the arts of peace;
To Tulle he went, as his department's town,
To-morrow morn to pay his money down.
In Italy, his second year begun,
This youth had served, when Italy was won.
He told of Montebello, and the fight
That ended fiercely with the close of night;
There was he wounded, fell, and thought to die.
Two Austrian cones had passed into his thigh;
One traversed it, the other, left behind,
In hospital the doctor had to find.

Digitized by Google

At eight of night he fell, and sadly lay
Till three of morning on the following day,
When peasants came and put him on a wain,
And drove him to Voghera in his pain.
To Alessandria thence the railway bore;
In Alessandria then two months and more
He lay in hospital; to lop the limb
The Italian doctor who attended him
Was much disposed, but high above the knee—
For life an utter cripple he would be.
Then came the typhoid fever, and the lack
Of food. And sick and hungering, on his back,
With French, Italians, Austrians, as he lay,
Arrived the tidings of Magenta's day,
And Milan entered in the burning June,
And Solferino's issue following soon.
Alas, the glorious wars! and shortly he
To Genoa, for the advantage of the sea,
And to Savona, suffering still, was sent,
And joined his now returning regiment.
Good were the Austrian soldiers, but the feel
They did not well encounter of cold steel,
Nor in the bayonet fence of man with man
Maintained their ground, but yielded, turned, and ran.
Les armes blanches and the rifled gun
Had fought the battles, and the victories won.
The glorious wars! but he, the doubtful chance
Of soldier's glory quitting and advance,
His wounded limb less injured than he feared,
Was dealing now in timber, it appeared,
Oak-timber finding for some mines of lead
Worked by an English company, he said.
This youth, perhaps, was twenty-three years old:
Simply and well his history he told.
They wished to hear about myself as well;
I told them, but it was not much to tell,
At the Mont Dore, of which the guide-book talks,
I'd taken, not the waters, but the walks;
Friends I had met, who on their southward way
Had gone before—I followed them to-day.
They wondered greatly at this wondrous thing:
Les Anglais are forever on the wing.
The *conducteur* said, everybody knew
We were descended of the wandering Jew.
I could not say, had always heard before
The Wandering Jew had been a bachelor;
Some said a *conducteur*. "*Mon Dieu*," said he,
"*Mais il avait diablement d'esprit,*
Et vous de même, Monsieur," and on we rolled,
And woods and vales and fuller streams behold.
About the time when peasant people sup,
We dropped the peasant, took a *curé* up,
In hat and bands and *soutane* all to fit;
He next the *conducteur* was put to sit,
I in the corner gained the senior place.
Brown was his hair, but closely shaved his face.
To lift his eyelids did he think it sin?
I saw a pair of soft brown eyes within.
Older he was, but looked like twenty-two,
Fresh from the cases, to the country new.
This *conducteur*, the *curé* at his side,
At once a twinkle in his eyes I spied:
He begged to hear about the pretty pair
Whom he supposed he had been marrying there;
The deed he hoped was comfortably done.
Monsieur l'Évêque he called him in his fun;
And lifted soon his voice for all to hear;
A baritone he had both strong and clear;
In fragments first of music made essay,
And tried his pipes, and modest felt his way.
Le verre en main la mort vous trouvera,
It was, or *A vous dirai-je, Maman,*
And then, *A toi, ma belle, à toi toujours,*
Till, of his organ's quality secure,
Trifling no more, but boldly, like a man,
He filled his chest and gallantly began.

THE CONDUCTEUR'S SONG.

Though I have seemed, against my wiser will,
Your victim, O ye tender foibles, still,
Once now for all, though half my heart be yours,
Adieu, sweet faults, adieu, ye gay amours.
Sad if it be, yet true it is to say,
I've fifty years, and 't is too late a day:
My limbs are shrinking, and my hair turns gray.
Adieu, gay loves, it is too late a day!
Once in your school (what good, alas! is once?)
I took my lessons and was not the dunce—
O what a pretty girl was then Juliette!
Don't you suppose that I remember yet,
Though thirty years divide me from the day,
When she and I first looked each other's way?
But now, mid-winter to be matched with May!
Adieu, gay loves, it is too late a day!

You lovely Marguerite! I shut my eyes,
And do my very utmost to be wise,
Yet see you still, and hear though closed my ears,
And think I'm young in spite of all my years.
Shall I forget you if I go away?
To leave is painful, but absurd to stay;
I've fifty dreadful reasons to obey.
Adieu, gay loves, it is too late a day!

The priest beside the lusty *conducteur*
Under his beaver sat, and looked demure;
Faintly he smiled, the company to please,
And folded held his hands above his knees.
Then *à propos* of nothing, had we heard,
He asked, about a thing that had occurred
At the Mont Dore a little time ago,
A wondrous cure? and when we answered, No,
About a little girl he told a tale,
Who, when her medicines were of no avail,
Was by the Doctor ordered to Mont Dore,
But nothing gained, and only suffered more;
This little child had in her simple way
Unto the Blessed Virgin learned to pray,
And as it happened, to an image there,
By the roadside one day she made her prayer,
And of Our Lady, who can hear on high,
Begged for her parents' sake she might not die:
Our Lady of Grace, whose attribute is love,
Beheld this child, and listened from above.
Her parents noticed, from that very day
Her malady began to pass away,
And but a fortnight after, as they tell,
They took her home rejoicing, sound and well.
Things come, he said, to show us, every hour,
We are surrounded by superior power.

Digitized by Google

Little we notice, but if once we see,
The seed of faith will grow into a tree.
The *conducteur* he wisely shook his head;
Strange things do happen in our time, he said;
If the *bon Dieu* but please, no doubt, indeed,
When things are desperate, yet they will succeed.
Ask the postilion here, and he can tell
Who cured his horse and what of it befell.
Then the postilion in his smock of blue
His pipe into his mouth's far corner drew,
And told about a farrier and a horse.
But his *Auvergnat* grew from bad to worse;
His rank Arvernian *patois* was so strong,
With what he said I could not go along;
And what befell, or how it came to pass,
And if it were a horse or if an ass,
The sequence of his phrase I could not keep,
And in the middle fairly sank to sleep.
When I awoke, I heard a stream below,
And on each bank saw houses in a row:
Corrèze the stream, the houses Tulle, they said;
Alighted here, and thankful went to bed.

"But how," said one, "about the Pyrenees?
In Hamlet give us Hamlet, if you please.
Your friend declares you said you met with there
A peasant beauty beauteous past compare,
Who fed her cows the mountain-peaks between,
And asked if at Velletri you had been:
And was Velletri larger than was Rome?
Her soldier-brother went away from home
Two years ago—to Rome it was he went,
And to Velletri was this summer sent.
He twenty-three, and she was sweet seventeen,
And fed her cows the mountain-peaks between;
Lightly along a rocky path she led,
And from a grange she brought you milk and bread;
In summer here she lived, and with the snow
Drove in October to the field below;
And where you lived, she asked, and oh! they say,
That with the English we shall fight some day.
Loveliest of peasant-girls that e'er was seen,
Feeding her cows the mountain-peaks between."
"'T is true," I said, "although to tell was mean:
My Pyrenean verses will you hear,
Though not about that peasant-girl, I fear?"
"Begin," they said, "the sweet bucolic song;
Though it to other maids and other cows belong."

CURRENTE CALAMO.

Quick, painter, quick, the moment seize
Amid the snowy Pyrenees;
More evanescent than the snow
The pictures come, are seen, and go:
Quick, quick, *currente calamo.*
I do not ask the tints that fill
The gate of day 'twixt hill and hill,
I ask not for the hues that fleet
Above the distant peaks; my feet
Are on a poplar-bordered road,
Where, with a saddle and a load,
A donkey, old and ashen-gray,
Reluctant works his dusty way.
Before him, still with might and main
Pulling his rope, the rustic rein,
A girl: before both him and me
Frequent she turns and lets me see,
Unconscious lets me scan and trace
The sunny darkness of her face,
And outlines full of Southern grace.
Following, I notice, yet and yet,
Her olive skin, dark eyes, deep set
And black, and blacker e'en than jet
The escaping hair that scantly showed,
Since o'er it in the country mode,
For winter warmth and summer shade,
The lap of scarlet cloth is laid.
And then back falling from the head
A crimson kerchief overspread
Her jacket blue, thence passing down
A skirt of darkest yellow brown,
Coarse stuff, allowing to the view
The smooth limb to the woolen shoe.
But who—here 's some one following too—
A priest, and reading at his book!
Read on, O priest, and do not look!
Consider—she is but a child—
Yet might your fancy be beguiled—
Read on, O priest, and pass and go!
But see, succeeding in a row,
Two, three, and four, a motley train,
Musicians wandering back to Spain;
With fiddle and with tambourine,
A man with women following seen;
What dresses, ribbon-ends, and flowers!
And, sight to wonder at for hours,
The man—to Philip has he sat?
With butterfly-like velvet hat,
One dame his big bassoon conveys,
On one his gentle arm he lays;
They stop and look, and something say,
And to "España" ask the way.
But while I speak and point them on,
Alas! my dearer friends are gone;
The dark-eyed maiden and the ass
Have had the time bridge to pass.
Vainly beyond it far descried;
Adieu: and peace with you abide,
Gray donkey and your beauteous guide.
The pictures come, the pictures go,
Quick, quick, *currente calamo.*

They praised the rhyme, but still would persevere
The eclogue of the mountain-peaks to hear:
Eclogue that never was; and then awhile
Of France, and Frenchmen, and our native isle,
They talked. Preinsular above the rest,
My friend his ardent politics expressed;
France was behind us all; he saw in France
Worst retrogression, and the least advance;
Her revolutions had but thrown her back,
Powerful just now, but wholly off the track;
They in religion were, as I had seen,
About where we in Chaucer's time had been.
In Chaucer's time! and yet their Wickliffe where?
Something they 'd kept, the worst part, of Voltaire.

Digitized by Google

Strong for Old England was New England too,
The clergyman was neutral in his view;
And I, for France, with more than I could do,
Though sound, my thesis did not long maintain.
The contemplation of the nightly main,
The vaulted heavens above, and under these
The black ship working through the dusky seas,
Deserting, to our narrow berths we crept,
Sound slumbering there, the watch while others kept.

III.

One after-night we took ourselves to task
For our neglect, who had forborne to ask
The clergyman, who sure must speak so well,
That he a tale for our behalf should tell.
He put us off: but ere the night was done,
Told us another and a sadder one.

THE CLERGYMAN'S TALE.

Edward and Jane a married couple were,
And fonder she of him or he of her
Were hard to say; their wedlock had begun
When in one year they both were twenty-one;
And friends who would not sanction left them free.
He gentle-born, nor his inferior she,
And neither rich; to the newly-wedded boy
A great insurance office found employ.
Strong in their loves and hopes, with joy they took
This narrow lot and the world's altered look;
Beyond their home they nothing sought or craved,
And even from the narrow income saved.
Their busy days for no *ennui* had place,
Neither grew weary of the other's face.
Nine happy years had crowned their married state
With children, one a little girl of eight;
With nine industrious years his income grew,
With his employers rose his favor too;
Nine years complete had passed, when something ailed;
Friends and the doctor said his health had failed;
He must recruit, or worse would come to pass,
And though to rest was hard for him, alas!
Three months of leave he found he could obtain,
And go, they said, get well, and work again.

Just at this juncture of their married life,
Her mother, sickening, begged to have his wife.
They let their house, and with the children she
Went to her mother, he beyond the sea.
Far to the South his orders were to go;
A watering-place whose name we need not know,
For climate and for change of scene was best:
There he was bid, laborious task to rest.

A dismal thing in foreign lands to roam
To one accustomed to an English home;
Dismal yet more, in health if feeble grown,
To live a boarder, helpless and alone,
In foreign town; and worse yet worse is made,
If 't is a town of pleasure and parade.
Dispiriting the public walks and seats,
The alien faces that the alien meets,
The caterer for amusement in the streets,
Accosting still whom he must still refuse,
Drearily every day this old routine renews.
Yet here this alien prospered; change of air
Or change of scene did more than tenderest care.
Three weeks were scarce completed, to his home
He wrote to say he thought he now could come,
His usual work was sure he could resume,
And something said about the place's gloom,
And how he loathed idling his time away.
O, but they wrote, his wife and all, to say
He must not think of it! 't was quite too quick;
Let was their house, her mother still was sick,
Three months were given, and three he ought to take,
For his and hers and for his children's sake.
He wrote again, 't was weariness to wait,
This doing nothing was a thing to hate;
He 'd cast his nine laborious years away,
And was as fresh as on his wedding day;
Yielded at last, supposed he must obey.
And now, his health repaired, his spirits grown
Less feeble, less he cared to live alone.
'T was easier now to walk the crowded shore,
The *table d'hôte* less tedious than before.
His ancient silence sometimes he would break,
And the mute Englishman was heard to speak.
His youthful color, soon his youthful air,
Came back; among the busy idlers there,
With whom good looks entitle to good name,
For his good looks he gained a sort of fame;
People would watch him as he went and came.

Explain the tragic mystery who can,
Something there is, we know not what in man,
With all established happiness at strife,
And bent on revolution in his life.
Explain the plan of Providence who dare,
And tell us wherefore in this world there are
Beings, who seem for this alone to live,
Temptation to another soul to give.
A beauteous woman at the *table d'hôte*,
To try this English heart, at least to note
This English countenance, conceived the whim.
She sat exactly opposite to him.

Ere long he noticed, with vague surprise,
How every day on him she bent her eyes;
Soft and inquiring now they looked, and then,
Wholly withdrawn, unnoticed came again;
His shrank aside; and yet there came a day,
Alas! they did not wholly turn away,
So beautiful her beauty was, so strange,
And to his Northern feeling such a change;
Her throat and neck Junonian in their grace,
The blood just mantled in her Southern face.
Dark hair, dark eyes, and all the arts she had
With which some dreadful power adorns the bad,
Bad women in their youth, and young was she,
Twenty perhaps, at the utmost twenty-three,
And timid seemed, and innocent of ill,
Her feelings went and came without her will;
He oscillated to and fro, he took
High courage oft, temptation from him shook,

Digitized by Google

Compelled himself to virtuous thoughts and just,
And as it were in ashes and in dust
Abhorred his thought. But living thus alone,
Of solitary tedium weary grown,
From sweet society so long debarred,
And fearing in his judgment to be hard
On her—that he was sometimes off his guard
What wonder? She, relentless still, pursued
Unmarked and tracked him in his solitude,
And not in vain, alas! she guessed his mood.

The days went by and found him in the snare;
But soon a letter, full of tenderest care,
Came from his wife; the little daughter too,
In a large hand—the exercise was new—
To her papa her love and kisses sent.
Into his very heart and soul it went;
Forth on the high and dusty road he sought
Some issue for the vortex of his thought,
Returned, packed up the things, and ere the day
Descended was a hundred miles away.

There are, I know of course, who lightly treat
Such slips; we stumble, we regain our feet;
What can we do, they say, but hasten on,
And disregard it as a thing that 's gone?
Many there are, who in a case like this
Would calm reseek their sweet, domestic bliss,
Accept unshamed the wifely tender kiss,
And lift their little children on their knees,
And take their kisses too; with hearts at ease
Will read the household prayers—to church will go,
And sacrament—nor care if people know.
Such men, so minded, do exist, God knows,
And God be thanked, this was not one of those.

Late in the night, at a provincial town
In France a passing traveller was put down;
Haggard he looked, his hair was turning gray,
His hair, his clothes were much in disarray.
In a bedchamber here one day he stayed,
Wrote letters, posted them, his reckoning paid,
And went! 'T was Edward rushing from his fall.
Here to his wife he wrote and told her all;
Forgiveness—yes, perhaps she might forgive:
For her and for the children he must live
At any rate; but their old home to share
As yet was something that he could not bear;
She with her mother still her home should make,
A lodging near the office he should take,
And once a quarter he would bring his pay,
And he would see her on the quarter-day;
But her alone—e'en this would dreadful be;
The children 't was not possible to see.
Back to the office at this early day
To see him come, old-looking thus and gray,
His comrades wondered—wondered, too, to see
How dire a passion for his work had he,
How in a garret too he lived alone,
So cold a husband, cold a father grown.

In a green lane beside her mother's home,
Where in old days they had been used to roam,
His wife had met him on the appointed day,
Fell on his neck, said all that love could say,
And wept; he put the loving arms away.
At dusk they met, for so was his desire;
She felt his cheeks and forehead all on fire;
The kisses which she gave he could not brook;
Once in her face he gave a side-long look,
Said, but for them he wished that he were dead,
And put the money in her hand, and fled.
Sometimes, in easy and familiar tone,
Of sins resembling more or less his own
He heard his comrades in the office speak,
And felt the color tingling in his cheek.
Lightly they spoke as of a thing of naught,
He of their judgment ne'er so much as thought.
I know not, in his solitary pains,
Whether he seemed to feel as in his veins
The moral mischief circulating still,
Racked with the torture of the double will,
And like some frontier land where armies wage
The mighty wars, engage and yet engage,
All through the summer in the fierce campaign,
March, countermarch, gain, lose, and yet regain,
With battle reeks the desolated plain,
So felt his nature yielded to the strife
Of the contending good and ill of life.
But a whole year this penance he endured;
Nor even then would think that he wascured.
Once in the quarter, in the country lane
He met his wife and paid his quarter's gain:
To bring the children she besought in vain.

He has a life small happiness that gives,
Who friendless in a London lodging lives,
Dines in a dingy chop-house, and returns
To a lone room, while all within him yearns
For sympathy, and his whole nature burns
With a fierce thirst for some one—is there none?—
To expend his human tenderness upon.
Unhappy he who in such temper meets,
Sister in pain, the unhappy of the streets.
So blank and hard and stony is the way
To walk, I wonder not men go astray.

Edward, whom still a sense that never slept
On the strict path undeviating kept,
One winter evening found himself pursued
Amid the dusky thronging multitude.
Quickly he walked, but strangely swift was she,
And pertinacious, and would make him see.
He saw at last, and, recognizing slow,
Discovered in this hapless thing of woe
The occasion of his shame twelve wretched months ago.

She gayly laughed, she cried and sought his hand
And spoke sweet phrases of her native land.
Exiled, she said, her lovely home had left,
Not to forsake a friend of all but her bereft,
Exiled, she cried, for liberty, for love,
She was; still limpid eyes she turned above.
So beauteous once, and now such misery in,
Pity had all but softened him to sin.
But while she talked, and wildly laughed and cried,
And plucked the hand which sadly he denied,
A stranger came and swept her from his side.
He watched them in the gas-lit darkness go,
And a voice said within him, "Even so,
So 'midst the gloomy mansions where they dwell,
The lost souls walk the flaming streets of hell."
The lamps appeared to fling a baleful glare,
A brazen heat was heavy in the air,

Digitized by Google

And it was hell, and he some unblest wanderer there.
For a long hour he stayed the streets to roam;
Late gathering sense, he gained his garret home,
There found a telegram that bade him come
Straight to the country, where his daughter, still
His darling child, lay dangerously ill.
The doctor would he bring? Away he went
And found the doctor; to the office sent
A letter, asking leave, and went again,
And, with a wild confusion in his brain,
Joining the doctor, caught the latest train.
The train swift whirled them from the city light
Into the shadows of the natural night.
'T was silent starry midnight on the down,
Silent and chill, when they, straight come from town,
Leaving the station, walked a mile to gain
The lonely house amid the hills, where Jane,
Her mother, and her children, should be found.
Waked by their entrance out of sleep unsound,
The child not yet her altered father knew;
Yet talked of her papa in her delirium too.
Danger there was, yet hope there was; and he
To attend the crisis and the changes see
And take the steps at hand should surely be.
Said Jane, the following day, "Edward, you know,
Over and over I have told you so,
As in a better world I seek to live,
As I desire forgiveness, I forgive.
Forgiveness does not feel the word to say:
As I believe in One who takes away
Our sin, and gives us righteousness instead,
You to this sin I do believe are dead.
'T was I, you know, who let you leave your home,
And bade you stay when you so wished to come;
My fault was that—I've told you so before,
And vainly told, but now 't is something more.
Say, is it right without a single friend,
Without advice, to leave me to attend
Children and mother both? Indeed, I've thought
Through want of you the child her fever caught.
Chances of mischief come with every hour:
It is not in a single woman's power
Alone, and ever haunted more or less
With anxious thoughts of you and your distress,
'T is not indeed, I 'm sure of it, in me,
All things with perfect judgment to foresee.
This weight has grown too heavy to endure,
And you, I tell you now, and I am sure,
Neglect your duty both to God and man,
Persisting thus in your unnatural plan.
This feeling you must conquer, for you can.
And after all, you know, we are but dust,
What are we, in ourselves that we should trust?"
He scarcely answered her; but he obtained
A longer leave, and quietly remained;
Slowly the child recovered, long was ill,
Long delicate, and he must watch her still;
To give up seeing her he could not bear;
To leave her less attended did not dare.
The child recovered slowly, slowly too
Recovered he, and more familiar drew
Home's happy breath—and, apprehension o'er,
Their former life he yielded to restore,
And to his mournful garret went no more.

Midnight was dim and hazy overhead
When the tale ended and we turned to bed.
Midnight was in the cabin still and dead,
Our fellow-passengers were all in bed;
We followed them and nothing further spoke.
Out of the sweetest of my sleep I woke
At two; I felt we stopped; amid a dream
Of England, knew the letting off of steam,
And rose. 'T was fog, and were we off Cape Race?
The Captain would be certain of his place.
Wild in white vapor flew away the force,
And self-arrested was the eager course
That had not ceased before. But shortly now
Cape Race was made to starboard on the bow.
The paddles plied. I slept. The following night,
In the mid-seas we saw a quay and light,
And peeped through mist into an unseen town,
And on scarce seeming land set one companion down,
And went. With morning and a shining sun
Under the high New Brunswick coast we run,
And visible discern to every eye
Rocks, pines, and little ports, and passing by
The boats and coasting craft. When sunk the night,
Early now sunk, the Northern streamers bright
Floated and flashed the cliffs and clouds behind;
With phosphorus the billows all were lined.
We sat, and little spoke. The following day
Bore us expectant into Boston Bay.
With dome and steeple on the yellow skies,
Upon the left we watched with curious eyes
The Puritan great Mother-City rise;
Among the islets winding in and round,
The great ship moved to her, appointed ground.
We bade adieu, shook hands and went on shore:
I and my friend have seen our friends no more.

COME BACK AGAIN.

Come back again, my olden heart!—
Ah, fickle spirit and untrue,
I bade the only guide depart
Whose faithfulness I surely knew:
I said, my heart is all too soft;
He who would climb and soar aloft,
Must needs keep ever at his side
The tonic of a wholesome pride.

Come back again, my olden heart!—
Alas! I called not then for thee;
I called for Courage, and apart
From Pride if Courage could not be,
Then welcome, Pride! and I shall find
In thee a power to lift the mind
This low and grovelling joy above—
'T is but the proud can truly love.

Digitized by Google

Come back again, my olden heart!—
With incrustations of the years
Uncased as yet,—as then thou wert,
Full-filled with shame and coward fears:
Wherewith, amid a jostling throng
Of deeds, that each and all were wrong,
The doubting soul, from day to day,
Uneasy paralytic lay.

Come back again, my olden heart!—
I said, Perceptions contradict,
Convictions come, anon depart,
And but themselves as false convict.
Assumptions hasty, crude, and vain,
Full oft to use will Science deign;
The corks the novice plies to-day
The swimmer soon shall cast away.

Come back again, my olden heart!—
I said, Behold, I perish quite,
Unless, to give me strength to start,
I make myself my rule of right:
It must be, if I act at all,
To save my shame I have at call
The plea of all men understood,
Because I willed it, it is good.

Come back again, my olden heart!—
I know not if in very deed
This means alone could aid impart
To serve my sickly spirit's need;
But clear alike of wild self-will,
And fear that faltered, paltered still,
Remorseful thoughts of after-days
A way espy betwixt the ways.

Come back again, old heart! Ah me!
Methinks in those thy coward fears
There might, perchance, a courage be,
That fails in these the manlier years;
Courage to let the courage sink,
Itself a coward base to think,
Rather than not for heavenly light
Wait on to show the truly right.

MY WIND IS TURNED TO BITTER NORTH.

My wind is turned to bitter north,
That was so soft a south before;
My sky, that shone so sunny bright,
With foggy gloom is clouded o'er:
My gay green leaves are yellow-black,
Upon the dank autumnal floor;
For love, departed once, comes back
No more again, no more.

A roofless ruin lies my home,
For winds to blow and rains to pour;
One frosty night befell, and lo!
I find my summer days are o'er;
The heart bereaved, of why and how
Unknowing, knows that yet before
It had what e'en to Memory now
Returns no more, no more.

HIGHER THINGS.

I have seen higher, holier things than these,
And therefore must to these refuse my heart,
Yet I am panting for a little ease;
I 'll take and so depart.

Ah, hold! the heart is prone to fall away,
Her high and cherished visions to forget,
And if thou takest, how wilt thou repay
So vast, so dread a debt?

How will the heart, which now thou trustest, then
Corrupt, yet in corruption mindful yet,
Turn with sharp stings upon itself? Again,
Bethink thee of the debt!

—Hast thou seen higher, holier things than these,
And therefore must to these thy heart refuse?
With the true best, alack, how ill agrees
That best that thou wouldst choose!

The Summum Pulchrum rests in heaven above;
Do thou, as best thou mayst, thy duty do:
Amid the things allowed thee live and love;
Some day thou shalt it view.

GOD WILL BE WITH THEE.

Farewell, my Highland lassie! when the year returns around,
Be it Greece, or be it Norway, where my vagrant feet are found,
I shall call to mind the place, I shall call to mind the day,
The day that 's gone forever, and glen that 's far away;
I shall mind me, be it Rhine or Rhone, Italian land or France,
Of the laughings and the whispers, of the pipings and the dance;
I shall see thy soft brown eyes dilate to wakening woman thought,
And whiter still the white cheek grow to which the blush was brought;
And oh! with mine commixing I thy breath of life shall feel,
And clasp the shyly passive hands in joyous Highland reel;
I shall hear, and see, and feel, and in sequence sadly true
Shall repeat the bitter-sweet of the lingering last adieu,
I shall seem as now to leave thee, with the kiss upon the brow,
And the fervent benediction of 'Ο θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ!

Ah me, my Highland lassie! though in winter drear and long
Deep arose the heavy snows, and the stormy winds were strong,
Though the rain, in summer's brightest, it were raining every day,
With worldly comforts few and far, how glad were I to stay!

Digitized by Google

I fall to sleep with dreams of life in some black
bothie spent,
Coarse poortith's ware thou changing there to
gold of pure content,
With barefoot lads and lassies round, and thee
the cheery wife,
In the braes of old Lochaber a laborious homely
life;
But I wake—to leave thee, smiling with the kiss
upon the brow,
And the peaceful benediction of 'O θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ!

QUA CURSUM VENTUS.

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce, long leagues apart, descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those whom, year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered:
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze, and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last!

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,
At last, at last, unite them there!

THERE IS NO GOD.

"There is no God," the wicked saith,
"And truly it's a blessing,
For what he might have done with us
It's better only guessing."

"There is no God," a youngster thinks,
"Or really if there may be,
He surely did n't mean a man
Always to be a baby."

"Whether there be," the rich man thinks
"It matters very little,
For I and mine, thank somebody,
Are not in want of victual."

Some others also to themselves
Who scarce so much as doubt it,
Think there is none, when they are well,
And do not think about it.

But country folks who live beneath
The shadow of the steeple,
The parson and the parson's wife,
And mostly married people,

Youths green and happy in first love,
So thankful for illusion,
And men caught out in what the world
Calls guilt, in first confusion,

And almost every one when age,
Disease, or sorrows strike him,
Inclines to think there is a God,
Or something very like him.

PESCHIERA.

What voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost?
"'T is better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all."

The tricolor—a trampled rag—
Lies dirt and dust; the lines I track
By sentries' boxes, yellow, black,
Lead up to no Italian flag.

I see the Croat soldier stand
Upon the grass of your redoubts;
The eagle with his black wing flouts
The breadth and beauty of your land.

Yet not in vain, although in vain,
O men of Brescia! on the day
Of loss past hope, I heard you say
Your welcome to the noble pain.

You said: "Since so it is, good-bye,
Sweet life, high hope; but whatsoe'er
May be, or must, no tongue shall dare
To tell, 'The Lombard feared to die!'"

You said (thee shall be answer fit):
"And if our children must obey,
They must; but, thinking on this day,
'T will less debase them to submit."

You said (O not in vain you said):
"Haste, brothers, haste, while yet we may;
The hours ebb fast of this one day,
While blood may yet be nobly shed."

Ah! not for idle hatred, not
For honor, fame, nor self-applause,
But for the glory of the cause,
You did what will not be forgot.

And though the stranger stand, 't is true,
By force and fortune's right he stands;
By fortune, which is in God's hands,
And strength, which yet shall spring in you

Digitized by Google

This voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost:
"'T is better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all."

WHERE LIES THE LAND.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know;
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace!
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights, when wild northwesters rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know;
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

VENIT HESPERUS.

The skies have sunk, and hid the upper snow,
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
The rainy clouds are filing fast below,
And wet will be the path, and wet shall we.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!

Ah, dear! and where is he, a year agone,
Who stepped beside and cheered us on and on?
My sweetheart wanders far away from me
In foreign land or on a foreign sea.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!

The lightning zigzags shoot across the sky,
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
And through the vale the rains go sweeping by;
Ah me! and when in shelter shall we be?
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)

Cold, dreary cold, the stormy winds feel they
O'er foreign lands and foreign seas that stray,
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
And doth he e'er, I wonder, bring to mind
The pleasant huts and herds he left behind?

And doth he sometimes in his slumbering see
The feeding kine, and doth he think of me,
My sweetheart wandering wheresoe'er it be?
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!

The thunder bellows far from snow to snow,
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
And loud and louder roars the flood below.
Heigh-ho! but soon in shelter shall we be:
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!

Or shall he find before his term be sped
Some comelier maid that he shall wish to wed?
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
For weary is work, and weary day by day
To have your comfort miles on miles away.
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)

Or may it be that I shall find my mate,
And he, returning, see himself too late?
For work we must, and what we see, we see,
And God he knows, and what must be, must be,
When sweethearts wander far away from me.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!

The sky behind is brightening up anew,
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie!)
The rain is ending, and our journey too:
Heigh-ho! aha! for here at home are we:—
In, Rose, and in, Provence and La Palie!

FAITH.

O thou whose image in the shrine
Of human spirits dwells divine,
Which from that precinct once conveyed,
To be to outer day displayed,
Doth vanish, part, and leave behind
Mere blank and void of empty mind,
Which wilful fancy seeks in vain
With casual shapes to fill again!

O thou, that in our bosom's shrine
Dost dwell, unknown because divine!
I thought to speak, I thought to say,
"The light is here," "behold the way,"
"The voice was thus," and "thus the word,"
And "thus I saw," and "that I heard,"—
But from the lips that half essayed,
The imperfect utterance fell unmade.

O thou, in that mysterious shrine
Enthroned, as I must say, divine!
I will not frame one thought of what
Thou mayest either be or not.
I will not prate of "thus" and "so,"
And be profane with "yes" and "no;"
Enough that in our soul and heart
Thou, whatso'er thou mayest be, art.

Unseen, secure in that high shrine
Acknowledged present and divine,
I will not ask some upper air,
Some future day, to place thee there;
Nor say, nor yet deny, such men
And women saw thee thus and then;
Thy name was such, and there or here
To him or her thou didst appear.

Do only thou in that dim shrine,
Unknown or known, remain divine;
There, or if not, at least in eyes
That scan the fact that round them lies:
The hand to sway, the judgment guide,
In sight and sense thyself divide.
Be thou but there—in soul and heart,
I will not ask to feel thou art.

Digitized by Google

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

CHARLES KINGSLEY was born in Holne, Devonshire, England, June 12, 1819. His father was vicar of Holne. He was graduated at Cambridge in 1842, and studied law for a while, but soon gave it up, and entered the church. He became curate of Eversley, Hampshire, and in 1844 was made rector. He accepted the chair of Modern History at Cambridge in 1859, and was made canon of Chester in 1869, and afterward canon of Westminster and chaplain to the Queen. He resigned his professorship in 1869, and in 1872 became editor of "Good Words." He visited the United States in 1873, travelled extensively, going as far as California, and lectured in the principal cities. He returned home in 1874, and died in London, January 23, 1875.

Kingsley held a pretty high place as a poet, a still higher as a novelist, and the highest of all as a philanthropist and friend of the laboring classes. For their improvement he united with Rev. F. D. Maurice and others in establishing coöperative associations, and two of his best novels—"Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet," and "Yeast: a Problem"—deal directly with the questions of labor and its compensation.

Mr. Kingsley's publications were as follows: "Twenty-five Village Sermons," 1844; "The Saint's Tragedy," 1848; "Alton Locke," 1850; "Yeast," 1851; "Sermons on National Subjects," 1852; "Phaëton; or, Loose Thoughts for Loose Thinkers," 1852; "Hypatia," a novel, 1853; "Alexandria and her Schools," 1854; "Sermons for the Times," 1854; "Westward Ho!" a novel, 1855; "Glaucus," a short treatise on marine zoölogy and botany, 1856; "The Heroes; or, Greek Fairy Tales," 1856; "Two Years ago," a novel, 1856; "Good News of God," sermons, 1859; "Sir Walter Raleigh and his Times," 1859; "The Water Babies," a fairy story, 1863; "The Roman and the Teuton," lectures, 1864; "Hereward, the Last of the English," 1866; "The Hermits," 1867; "How and Why," 1869; "At Last: a Christmas in the West Indies," 1871; "Plays and Puritans," 1873; "Prose Idyls," 1873; "Westminster Sermons," 1874; and "Health and Education," 1874.

The first collection of his poems was published in Boston, Mass., in 1856, and republished in London the next year; "Andromeda" was published in 1858. A complete edition of his poems appeared in London in 1872. His lectures in America, edited by his widow, were published in 1876.

ANDROMEDA.

OVER the sea, past Crete, on the Syrian shore to the southward,
Dwells in the well-tilled lowland a dark-haired Æthiop people,
Skilful with needle and loom, and the arts of the dyer and carver,
Skilful, but feeble of heart; for they know not the lords of Olympus,
Lovers of men; neither broad-browed Zeus, nor Pallas Athené,
Teacher of wisdom to heroes, bestower of might in the battle;
Share not the cunning of Hermes, nor list to the songs of Apollo.
Fearing the stars of the sky, and the roll of the blue salt-water,
Fearing all things that have life in the womb of the seas and the rivers,
Eating no fish to this day, nor ploughing the main, like the Phœnics,
Manful with black-beaked ships, they abide in a sorrowful region,
Vexed with the earthquake, and flame, and the sea-floods, scourge of Poseidon.
Whelming the dwellings of men, and the toils of the slow-footed oxen,
Drowning the barley and flax, and the hard-earned gold of the harvest,
Up to the hillside vines, and the pastures skirting the woodland,
Inland the floods came yearly; and after the waters a monster,
Bred of the slime, like the worms which are bred from the muds of the Nile-bank,
Shapeless, a terror to see; and by night it swam out to the seaward,
Daily returning to feed with the dawn, and devoured of the fairest,
Cattle, and children, and maids, till the terrified people fled inland.
Fasting in sackcloth and ashes they came, both the king and his people,
Came to the mountain of oaks, to the house of the terrible sea-gods,

Digitized by Google

Hard by the gulf in the rocks, where of old the world-wide deluge
Sank to the inner abyss; and the lake where the fish of the goddess,
Holy, undying, abide; whom the priests feed daily with dainties.
There to the mystical fish, high-throned in her chamber of cedar,
Burnt they the fat of the flock; till the flame shone far to the seaward.
Three days fasting they prayed: but the fourth day the priests of the goddess,
Cunning in spells, cast lots, to discover the crime of the people.
All day long they cast, till the house of the monarch was taken,
Cepheus, king of the land; and the faces of all gathered blackness.
Then once more they cast; and Cassiopœia was taken,
Deep-bosomed wife of the king, whom oft far-seeing Apollo
Watched well-pleased from the welkin, the fairest of Æthiop women:
Fairest, save only her daughter; for down to the ankle her tresses
Rolled, blue-black as the night, ambrosial, joy to beholders.
Awful and fair she arose, most like in her coming to Hebe,
Queen before us whom the Immortals arise, as she comes on Olympus,
Out of the chamber of gold, which her son Hephæstos has wrought her.
Such in her stature and eyes, and the broad white light of her forehead.
Stately she came from her palace, and she spoke in the midst of the people:
"Pure are my hands from blood: most pure this heart in my bosom.
Yet one fault I remember this day: one word have I spoken;
Rashly I spoke on the shore, and I dread lest the sea should have heard it.
Watching my child at her bath, as she plunged in the joy of her girldhood,
Fairer I called her in pride then Atergati, queen of the ocean.
Judge ye if this be my sin, for I know none other." She ended;
Wrapping her head in her mantle she stood, and the people were silent.
Answered the dark-browed priests: "No word, once spoken, returneth,
Even if utterd unwitting. Shall gods excuse our rashness?
That which is done, that abides; and the wrath of the sea is against us;
Hers, and the wrath of her brother, the Sun-god, lord of the sheepfolds.
Fairer than her hast thou boasted thy daughter? Ah, folly! for hateful,
Hateful are they to the gods, whoso, impious, liken a mortal,
Fair though he be, to their glory; and hateful is that which is likened,
Grieving the eyes of their pride, and abominate, doomed to their anger.
What shall be likened to gods? The unknown, who deep in the darkness
Ever abide, twyformed, many-handed, terrible, shapeless.
Woe to the queen; for the land is defiled, and the people accursed.
Take thou her therefore by night, thou ill-starred Cassiopœia,
Take her with us in the night, when the moon sinks low to the westward;
Bind her aloft for a victim, a prey for the gorge of the monster,
Far on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever;
So may the goddess accept her, and so may the land make atonement,
Purged by her blood from its sin; so obey thou the doom of the rulers."
Bitter in soul they went out, Cepheus and Cassiopœia,
Bitter in soul; and their hearts whirled round, as the leaves in the eddy.
Weak was the queen, and rebelled; but the king, like a sheperd of people,
Willed not the land should waste; so he yielded the life of his daughter.
Deep in the wane of the night, as the moon sank low to the westward,
They by the shade of the cliffs, with the horror of darkness around them,
Stole, as ashamed, to a deed which became not the light of the sunshine,
Slowly, the priests, and the queen, and the virgin bound in the galley.
Slowly they rowed to the rocks; but Cepheus far in the palace
Sate in the midst of the hall, on his throne, like a shepherd of people,
Choking his woe, dry-eyed, while the slaves wailed loudly around him.
They on the sea-girt rock, which is washed by the surges for ever,
Set her in silence, the guiltless, aloft with her face to the eastward.
Under a crag of the stone, where a ledge sloped down to the water,
There they set Andromeden, most beautiful, shaped like a goddess,
Lifting her long white arms wide-spread to the walls of the basalt,
Chaining them, ruthless, with brass; and they called on the might of the Rulers:
"Mystical fish of the seas, dread Queen whom Æthiops honor,
Whelming the land in thy wrath, unavoidable, sharp as the sting-ray,
Thou, and thy brother the Sun, brain-smiting, lord of the sheepfold,
Scorching the earth all day, and then resting at night in thy bosom,
Take ye this one life for many, appeased by the blood of a maiden,
Fairest, and born of the fairest, a queen, most priceless of victims."
Thrice they spat as they went by the maid; but her mother delaying
Fondled her child to the last, heart-crushed; and the warmth of her weeping
Fell on the breast of the maid, as her woe broke forth into wailing.
"Daughter! my daughter! forgive me! O curse not the murderess! Curse not!

Digitized by Google

How have I sinned, but in love? Do the gods grudge glory to mothers?
Loving I bore thee in vain in the fate-cursed bride-bed of Cepheus,
Loving I fed thee and tended, and loving rejoiced in thy beauty,
Blessing thy limbs as I bathed them, and blessing thy locks as I combed them;
Decking thee, ripening to woman, I blest thee: yet blessing I slew thee!
How have I sinned, but in love? O swear to me, swear to thy mother,
Never to haunt me with curse, as I go to the grave in my sorrow,
Childless and lone: may the gods never send me another, to slay it!
See, I embrace thy knees—soft knees, where no babe will be fondled—
Swear to me never to curse me, the hapless one, not in the death-pang."
Weeping she clung to the knees of the maid; and the maid low answered—
"Curse thee! Not in the death-pang!" The heart of the lady was lightened.
Slowly she went by the ledge; and the maid was alone in the darkness.
Watching the pulse of the oars die down, as her own died with them,
Tearless, dumb with amaze she stood, as a storm-stunned nestling
Fallen from bough or from eave lies dumb, which the home-going herdsman
Fancies a stone, till he catches the light of its terrified eyeball.
So through the long long hours the maid stood helpless and hopeless,
Wide-eyed, downward gazing in vain at the black blank darkness.
Feebly at last she began, while wild thoughts bubbled within her:
"Guiltless I am: why thus, then? Are gods more ruthless than mortals?
Have they no mercy for youth? no love for the souls who have loved them?
Even as I loved thee, dread sea, as I played by thy margin,
Blessing thy wave as it cooled me, thy wind as it breathed on my forehead,
Bowing my head to thy tempest, and opening my heart to thy children,
Silvery fish, wreathed shell, and the strange lithe things of the water,
Tenderly casting them back, as they gasped on the beach in the sunshine,
Home to their mother—in vain! for mine sits childless in anguish!
O dread sea! false sea! I dreamed what I dreamed of thy goodness;
Dreamed of a smile in thy gleam, of a laugh in the plash of thy ripple:
False and devouring thou art, and the great world dark and despiteful."
Awed by her own rash words she was still: and her eyes to the seaward
Looked for an answer of wrath: far off, in the heart of the darkness,
Bright white mists rose slowly; beneath them the wandering ocean
Glimmered and glowed to the deepest abyss; and the knees of the maiden
Trembled and sank in her fear, as afar, like a dawn in the midnight,
Rose from their seaweed chamber the choir of the mystical sea-maids.
Onward toward her they came, and her heart beat loud at their coming,
Watching the bliss of the gods, as they wakened the cliffs with their laughter.
Onward they came in their joy, and before them the roll of the surges
Sank, as the breeze sank dead, into smooth green foam-flecked marble,
Awed; and the crags of the cliff, and the pines of the mountain were silent.
Onward they came in their joy, and around them the lamps of the sea-nymphs,
Myriad fiery globes, swam panting and heaving; and rainbows,
Crimson and azure and emerald, were broken in star-showers, lighting
Far through the wine-dark depths of the crystal, the gardens of Nereus,
Coral and sea-fan and tangle, the blooms and palms of the ocean.
Onward they came in their joy, more white than the foam which they scattered,
Laughing and singing, and tossing and twining, while eager, the Tritons
Blinded with kisses their eyes, unreproved, and above them in worship
Hovered the terns, and the sea gulls swept past them on silvery pinions
Echoing softly their laughter; around them the wantoning dolphins
Sighed as they plunged, full of love; and the great sea-horses which bore them
Curved up their crests in their pride to the delicate arms of the maidens,
Pawing the spray into gems, till a fiery rainfall, unharming,
Sparkled and gleamed on the limbs of the nymphs and the coils of the mermen.
Onward they went in their joy, bathed round with the fiery coolness,
Needing nor sun nor moon, self-lighted, immortal; but others,
Pitiful, floated in silence apart; in their bosoms the sea-boys,
Slain by the wrath of the seas, swept down by the anger of Nereus;
Hapless, whom never again on strand or on quay shall their mothers
Welcome with garlands and vows to the temple, but wearily pining
Gaze over island and bay for the sails of the sunken; they heedless
Sleep in soft bosoms for ever, and dream of the surge and the sea-maids.
Onward they past in their joy, on their brows neither sorrow nor anger;
Self-sufficing, as gods, never heeding the woe of the maiden.
She would have shrieked for their mercy; but shame made her dumb; and their eyeballs
Stared on her careless and still, like the eyes in the house of the idols.
Seeing they saw not, and passed, like a dream, on the murmuring ripple.
Stunned by the wonder she gazed, wide-eyed, as the glory departed.

Digitized by Google

"Oh fair shapes! far fairer than I! Too fair to be ruthless!
Gladden mine eyes once more with your splendor, unlike to my fancies;
You, then, smiled in the sea-gleam, and laughed in the plash of the ripple.
Awful I deemed you and formless; inhuman, monstrous as idols;
Lo, when ye came, ye were women, more loving and lovelier, only;
Like in all else: and I blest you; why blest ye not me for my worship?
Had you no mercy for me, the guiltless? Ye pitied the sea-boys:
Why not me, then, more hapless by far? Does your sight and your knowledge
End with the marge of the waves? Is the world which ye dwell in not our world?"

Over the mountain aloft ran a rush and a roll and a roaring;
Downward the breeze came indignant, and leaped with a howl to the water,
Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts of the basalt
Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad with the noises:
Crashing and lapping of waters, and sighing and tossing of weed-beds,
Gurgle and whisper and hiss of the foam, while thundering surges
Boomed in the wave-worn halls, as they champed at the roots of the mountain.
Hour after hour in the darkness the wind rushed fierce to the landward,
Drenching the maiden with spray; she shivering, weary, and drooping,
Stood with her heart full of thoughts, till the foam-crests gleamed in the twilight,
Leaping and laughing around, and the east grew red with the dawning.
Then on the ridge of the hills rose the broad bright sun in his glory,
Hurling his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of the surges,
Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs of the coastland;
Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced teeth of the ledges;
Showing the maiden her home through the veil of her locks, as they floated
Glistening, damp with the spray, in a long black cloud to the landward.
High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the homesteads;
Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out-going herdsman,
Slid to her ear on the water and melted her heart into weeping.
Shuddering, she tried to forget them; and straining her eyes to the seaward,
Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to the terrible Sun-god:
"Dost thou not pity me, Sun, though thy wild dark sister be ruthless;
Dost thou not pity me here, as thou seest me desolate, weary,
Sickened with shame and despair, like a kid torn young from its mother?
What if my beauty insult thee, then blight it: but me—oh spare me!
Spare me yet, ere he be here, fierce, tearing, unbearable! See me,
See me, how tender and soft, and thus helpless! See how I shudder,
Fancying only my doom. Wilt thou shine thus bright, when it takes me?
Are there no deaths save this, great Sun? No fiery arrow,
Lightning, or deep-mouthed wave? Why thus? What music in shrieking,
Pleasure in warm live limbs torn slowly? And dar'st thou behold them?
Oh, thou hast watched worse deeds! All sights are alike to thy brightness!
What if thou waken the birds to their song, dost thou waken no sorrow;
Waken no sick to their pain; no captive to wrench at his fetters?
Smile on the garden and fold, and on maidens who sing at the milking;
Flash into tapestried chambers, and peep in the eyelids of lovers,
Showing the blissful their bliss—Dost love, then, the place where thou smilest?
Lovest thou cities aflame, fierce blows, and the shrieks of the widow?
Lovest thou corpse-strewn fields, as thou lightest the path of the vulture?
Lovest thou these, that thou gazest so gay on my tears, and my mother's,
Laughing alike at the horror of one, and the bliss of another?
What dost thou care, in thy sky, for the joys and sorrows of mortals?
Colder art thou than the nymphs: in thy broad bright eye is no seeing.
Hadst thou a soul—as much soul as the slaves in the house of my father,
Wouldst thou not save? Poor thralls! they pitied me, clung to me weeping,
Kissing my hands and my feet.—What! are gods more ruthless than mortals?
Worse than the souls which they rule? Let me die: they war not with ashes!"
Sudden she ceased, with a shriek: in the spray, like a hovering foam-bow,
Hung, more fair than the foam-bow, a boy in the bloom of his manhood,
Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial; over his shoulder
Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of the goat-skin,
Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear on its clearness.
Curved on his thigh lay a falchion, and under the gleam of his helmet
Eyes more blue than the main shone awful; around him Athené
Shed in her love such grace, such state, and terrible daring.
Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,
Living, a wonder, outgrown from the tight-laced gold of his sandals;
Bounding from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests like a sea-gull;
Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy of his leaping.

Digitized by Google

Fair and majestic he sprang to the rock; and the maiden in wonder
Gazed for a while, and then hid in the dark-rolling wave of her tresses,
Fearful, the light of her eyes: while the boy (for her sorrow had awed him)
Blushed at her blushes, and vanished, like mist on the cliffs at the sunrise.
Fearful at length she looked forth: he was gone: she, wild with amazement,
Wailed for her mother aloud: but the wail of the wind only answered.
Sudden he flashed into sight, by her side; in his pity and anger
Moist were his eyes; and his breath like a rose-bed, as bolder and bolder,
Hovering under her brows, like a swallow that haunts by the house-eaves,
Delicate-handed, he lifted the veil of her hair; while the maiden
Motionless, frozen with fear, wept loud; till his lips unclosing
Poured from their pearl-strung portal the musical wave of his wonder.
"Ah," well spoke she, the wise one, the gray-eyed Pallas Athené,—
"Known to Immortals alone are the prizes which lie for the heroes
Ready prepared at their feet; for requiring a little, the rulers
Pay back the loan tenfold to the man who careless of pleasure,
Thirsting for honor and toil, fares forth on a perilous errand
Led by the guiding of gods, and strong in the strength of Immortals.
Thus have they led me to thee: from afar, unknowing, I marked thee,
Shining, a snow-white cross on the dark-green walls of the sea-cliff;
Carven in marble I deemed thee, a perfect work of the craftsman.
Likeness of Amphitrité, or far-famed Queen Cythereia.
Curious I came, till I saw how thy tresses streamed in the sea-wind,
Glistening, black as the night, and thy lips moved slow in thy wailing.
Speak again now—oh speak! For my soul is stirred to avenge thee;
Tell me what barbarous horde, without law, unrighteous and heartless,
Hateful to gods and to men, thus have bound thee, a shame to the sunlight,
Scorn and prize to the sailor: but my prize now; for a coward,
Coward and shameless were he, who so finding a glorious jewel
Cast on the wayside by fools, would not win it and keep it and wear it,
Even as I will thee; for I swear by the head of my father,
Bearing thee over the sea-wave, to wed thee in Argos the fruitful,
Beautiful, meed of my toil no less than this head which I carry,
Hidden here fearful—oh speak!"

But the maid, still dumb with amazement,
Watered her bosom with weeping and longed for her home and her mother.
Beautiful, eager, he wooed her, and kissed off her tears as he hovered,
Roving at will, as a bee, on the brows of a rock nymph-haunted,
Garlanded over with vine, and acanthus, and clambering roses,
Cool in the fierce still noon, where streams glance clear in the moss-beds,
Hums on from blossom to blossom, and mingles the sweets as he tastes them.
Beautiful, eager, he kissed her, and clasped her yet closer and closer,
Praying her still to speak:

"Not cruel nor rough did my mother
Bear me to broad-browed Zeus in the depths of the brass-covered dungeon;
Neither in vain, as I think, have I talked with the cunning of Hermes,
Face unto face, as a friend; or from gray-eyed Pallas Athené
Learned what is fit, and respecting myself, to respect in my dealings
Those whom the gods should love; so fear not; to chaste espousals
Only I woo thee, and swear, that a queen, and alone without rival
By me thou sittest in Argos of Hellas, throne of my fathers,
Worshipped by fair-haired kings: why callest thou still on thy mother?
Why did she leave thee thus here? For no foeman has bound thee; no foeman
Winning with strokes of the sword such a prize, would so leave it behind him."

Just as at first some colt, wild-eyed, with quivering nostril,
Plunges in fear of the curb, and the fluttering robes of the rider;
Soon, grown bold by despair, submits to the will of his master,
Tamer and tamer each hour, and at last, in the pride of obedience,
Answers the heel with a curvet, and arches his neck to be fondled,
Cowed by the need that maid grew tame; while the hero indignant
Tore at the fetters which held her: the brass, too cunningly tempered,
Held to the rock by the nails, deep wedged: till the boy, red with anger,
Drew from his ivory thigh, keen flashing, a falchion of diamond—
"Now let the work of the smith try strength with the arms of Immortals!"
Dazzling it fell; and the blade, as the vine-hook shears off the vine-bough,
Carved through the strength of the brass, till her arms fell soft on his shoulder.
Once she essayed to escape: but the ring of the water was round her,
Round her the ring of his arms; and despairing she sank on his bosom.
Then, like a fawn when startled, she looked with a shriek to the seaward:
"Touch me not, wretch that I am! For accursed, a shame and a hissing,

Digitized by Google

Guiltless, accursed no less, I await the revenge of the sea-gods.
Yonder it comes! Ah, go! Let me perish unseen, if I perish!
Spare me the shame of thine eyes, when merciless fangs must tear me
Piecemeal! Enough to endure by myself in the light of the sunshine,
Guiltless, the death of a kid!"
But the boy still lingered around her,
Loath, like a boy, to forego her, and waken the cliffs with his laughter.
"Yon is the foe, then? A beast of the sea? I had deemed him immortal;
Titan, or Proteus' self, or Nereus, foeman of sailors:
Yet would I fight with them all, but Poseidon, shaker of mountains,
Uncle of mine, whom I fear, as is fit; for he haunts on Olympus,
Holding the third of the world; and the gods all rise at his coming.
Unto none else will I yield, god-helped: how then to a monster?
Child of the earth and of night, unreasoning, shapeless, accursed?"
"Art thou, too, then a god?"
"No god I," smiling he answered;
"Mortal as thou, yet divine; but mortal the herds of the ocean,
Equal to men in that only, and less in all else; for they nourish
Blindly the life of the lips, untaught by the gods, without wisdom;
Shame if I fled before such!"

In her heart new life was enkindled,
Worship and trust, fair parents of love: but she answered him sighing:
"Beautiful, why wilt thou die? Is the light of the sun, then, so worthless,
Worthless to sport with thy fellows in flowery glades of the forest,
Under the broad green oaks, where never again shall I wander,
Tossing the ball with my maidens, or wreathing the altar in garlands,
Careless, with dances and songs, till the glens rang loud to our laughter?
Too full of death the sad earth is already; the halls full of weepers,
Quarried by tombs all cliffs, and the bones gleam white on the sea-floor,
Numberless, gnawn by the herds who attend on the pitiless sea-gods,
Even as mine will be soon: and yet noble it seems to me, dying,
Giving my life for the many, to save to the arms of their lovers
Maidens and youths for a while: thee, fairest of all, shall I slay thee?
Add not thy bones to the many, thus angering idly the dread ones!
Either the monster will crush, or the sea-queen's self overwhelm thee,
Vengeful, in tempest and foam, and the thundering walls of the surges.
Why wilt thou follow me down? can we love in the black blank darkness?
Love in the realms of the dead, in the land where all is forgotten?
Why wilt thou follow me down? is it joy, on the desolate oozes,
Meagre to flit, gray ghosts in the depths of the gray salt water?
Beautiful! why wilt thou die, and defraud fair girls of thy manhood?
Surely one waits for thee longing, afar in the isles of the ocean.
Go thy way; I mine: for the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Sobbing she ended her moan, as her neck, like a storm-bent lily,
Drooped with the weight of her woe, and her limbs sank, weary with watching,
Soft on the hard-ledged rock, but the boy, with his eye on the monster,
Clasped her, and stood, like a god; and his lips curved proud as he answered:
"Great are the pitiless sea-gods: but greater the Lord of Olympus;
Greater the Ægis-wielder, and greater is she who attends him.
Clear-eyed Justice her name is, the counsellor, loved of Athené;
Helper of heroes, who dare, in the god-given might of their manhood,
Greatly to do and to suffer, and far in the fens and the forests
Smite the devourers of men, Heaven-hated, brood of the giants,
Twyformed, strange, without like, who obey not the golden-haired Rulers.
Vainly rebelling they rage, till they die by the swords of the heroes,
Even as this must die; for I burn with the wrath of my father,
Wandering, led by Athené; and dare whatsoever betides me.
Led by Athené I won from the gray-haired terrible sisters
Secrets hidden from men, when I found them asleep on the sand-hills,
Keeping their eye and their tooth, till they showed me the perilous pathway
Over the waterless ocean, the valley that led to the Gorgon.
Her too I slew in my craft, Medusa, the beautiful horror;
Taught by Athené I slew her, and saw not herself, but her image,
Watching the mirror of brass, in the shield which a goddess had lent me;
Cleaving her brass-sealed throat, as she lay with her adders around her,
Fearless I bore off her head, in the folds of the mystical goat-skin,
Hide of Amaltheié, fair nurse of the Ægis-wielder.
Hither I bear it, a gift to the gods, and a death to my foemen,
Freezing the seer to stone, to hide thine eyes from the horror.
Kiss me but once, and I go."
Then lifting her neck, like a sea-bird
Peering up over the wave, from the foam-white swells of her bosom,
Blushing she kissed him: afar on the topmost Idalian summit

Digitized by Google

Laughed in the joy of her heart, far-seeing, the Queen Aphrodité.
Loosing his arms from her waist he flew upward, awaiting the sea-beast.
Onward it came from the southward, as bulky and black as a galley,
Lazily coasting along, as the fish fled leaping before it;
Lazily breasting the ripple, and watching by sand-bar and headland,
Listening for laughter of maidens at bleaching, or song of the fisher,
Children at play on the pebbles, or cattle that pawed on the sand-hills.
Rolling and dripping it came, where bedded in glistening purple
Cold on the cold sea-weeds lay the long white sides of the maiden,
Trembling, her face in her hands, and her tresses afloat on the water.
As when an osprey aloft, dark-eyebrowed, royally crested,
Flags on by creek and by cove, and in scorn of the anger of Nereus
Ranges, the king of the shore; if he see on a glittering shallow,
Chasing the bass and the mullet, the fin of a wallowing dolphin,
Halting, he wheels round slowly, in doubt at the weight of his quarry,
Whether to clutch it alive, or to fall on the wretch like a plummet,
Stunning with terrible talon the life of the brain in the hindhead:
Then rushes up with a scream, and stooping the wrath of his eyebrows
Falls from the sky like a star, while the wind rattles hoarse in his pinions.
Over him closes the foam for a moment; then from the sand-bed
Rolls up the great fish, dead, and his side gleams white in the sunshine.
Thus fell the boy on the beast, unveiling the face of the Gorgon;
Thus fell the boy on the beast; thus rolled up the beast in his horror,
Once, as the dead eyes glared into his; then his sides, death-sharpened,
Stiffened and stood, brown rock, in the wash of the wandering water.
Beautiful, eager, triumphant, he leaped back again to his treasure;
Leaped back again, full blest, toward arms spread wide to receive him.
Brimful of honor he clasped her, and brimful of love she caressed him,
Answering lip with lip: while above them the Queen Aphrodité
Poured on their foreheads and limbs, unseen, ambrosial odors,
Givers of longing, and rapture, and chaste content in espousals.
Happy whom ere they be wedded anoints she, the Queen Aphrodité!
Laughing she called to her sister, the chaste Tritonid Athené:
"Seest thou yonder thy pupil, thou maid of the Ægis-wielder?
How he has turned himself wholly to love, and caresses a damsel,
Dreaming no longer of honor, or danger, or Pallas Athené?
Sweeter, it seems, to the young my gifts are; so yield me the stripling;
Yield him me now, lest he die in his prime, like hapless Adonis."
Smiling she answered in turn, that chaste Tritonid Athené:
"Dear unto me, no less than to thee, is the wedlock of heroes;
Dear, who can worthily win him a wife not unworthy; and noble,
Pure with the pure to beget brave children, the like of their father.
Happy, who thus stands linked to the heroes who were, and who shall be;
Girdled with holiest awe, not sparing of self; for his mother
Watches his steps with the eyes of the gods; and his wife and his children
Move him to plan and to do in the farm and the camp and the council.
Thence comes weal to a nation: but woe upon woe, when the people
Mingle in love at their will, like the brutes, not heeding the future."
Then from her gold-strung loom, where she wrought in her chamber of cedar,
Awful and fair she arose; and she went by the glens of Olympus;
Went by the isles of the sea, and the wind never ruffled her mantle;
Went by the water of Crete, and the black-beaked fleets of the Phœnics;
Came to the sea-girt rock which is washed by the surges for ever,
Bearing the wealth of the gods, for a gift to the bride of a hero.
There she met Andromeden and Persea, shaped like Immortals;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, while their hearts beat loud at her coming;
Solemn and sweet was her smile, as she spoke to the pair in her wisdom:
"Three things hold we, the Rulers, who sit by the founts of Olympus,
Wisdom, and prowess, and beauty; and freely we pour them on mortals;
Pleased at our image in man, as a father at his in his children.
One thing only we grudge to mankind: when a hero, unthankful,
Boasts of our gifts as his own, stiff-necked, and dishonors the givers,
Turning our weapons against us. Him Até follows avenging;
Slowly she tracks him and sure, as a lyme-hound; sudden she grips him,
Crushing him, blind in his pride, for a sign and a terror to folly.
This we avenge, as is fit; in all else never weary of giving.
Come, then, damsel, and know if the gods grudge pleasure to mortals."
Loving and gentle she spoke: but the maid stood in awe, as the goddess
Plaited with soft swift finger her tresses, and decked her in jewels,
Armlet and anklet and earbell; and over her shoulders a necklace,

Digitized by Google

Heavy, enamelled, the flower of the gold and the brass of the mountain.
Trembling with joy she gazed, so well Hæphaistos had made it,
Deep in the forges of Ætna, while Charis his lady beside him
Mingled her grace in his craft as he wrought for his sister Athené.
Then on the brows of the maiden a veil bound Pallas Athené;
Ample it fell to her feet, deep-fringed, a wonder of weaving.
Ages and ages agone it was wrought on the heights of Olympus,
Wrought in the gold-strung loom, by the finger of cunning Athené.
In it she wove all creatures that teem in the womb of the ocean;
Nereid, siren, and triton, and dolphin, and arrowy fishes
Glittering round, many-hued, on the flame-red folds of the mantle.
In it she wove, too, a town where gray-haired kings sat in judgment;
Sceptre in hand in the market they sat, doing right by the people,
Wise: while above watched Justice, and near, far-seeing Apollo.
Round it she wove for a fringe all herbs of the earth and the water,
Violet, asphodel, ivy, and vine-leaves, roses and lilies,
Coral and sea-fan, and tangle, the blooms and the palms of the ocean:
Now from Olympus she bore it, a dower to the bride of a hero.
Over the limbs of the damsel she wrapped it: the maid still trembled,
Shading her face with her hands; for the eyes of the goddess were awful.
Then, as a pine upon Ida when southwest winds blow landward,
Stately she bent to the damsel, and breathed on her: under her breathing
Taller and fairer she grew; and the goddess spoke in her wisdom:
"Courage I give thee; the heart of a queen, and the mind of Immortals;
Godlike to talk with the gods, and to look on their eyes unshrinking;
Fearing the sun and the stars no more, and the blue salt water;
Fearing us only, the lords of Olympus, friends of the heroes;
Chastely and wisely to govern thyself and thy house and thy people,
Bearing a godlike race to thy spouse, till dying I set thee
High for a star in the heavens, a sign and a hope to the seamen,
Spreading thy long white arms all night in the heights of the æther,
Hard by thy sire and the hero thy spouse, while near thee thy mother
Sits in her ivory chair, as she plaits ambrosial tresses.
All night long thou wilt shine; all day thou wilt feast on Olympus,
Happy, the guest of the gods, by thy husband, the god-begotten."
Blissful, they turned them to go: but the fair-tressed Pallas Athené
Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver Olympus;
Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and the mainland;
Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy Immortals,
Shrouded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable; there ever youthful
Hebé, Harmonié, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodité,
Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand within hand, while clear piped Phœbe, queen of the woodlands.
All day long they rejoiced: but Athené still in her chamber
Bent herself over her loom, as the stars rang loud to her singing,
Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warden of nations;
Chanting of labor and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner;
Chanting of valor and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,
Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and solemnly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals:
Happy, who hearing obey her, the wise unsullied Athené.

THE SANDS OF DEE.

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land;
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress of golden hair,
A drownèd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

Digitized by Google

THE THREE FISHERS.

THREE fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there 's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor-bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the light-house tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor-bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it 's over, the sooner to sleep;
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

THE OUBIT.

IT was an hairy oubit, sae proud he crept alang;
A feckless hairy oubit, and merrily he sang:
"My Minnie bad me bide at hame until I won my wings;
I 'll shew her soon my soul 's aboon the warks o' creeping things."

This feckless hairy oubit cam' hirpling by the linn,
A swirl o' wind cam' doun the glen, and blew that oubit in:
O when he took the water, the saumon-fry they rose,
And tigg'd him a' to pieces sma', by head and tail and toes.

Tak' warning then, young poets a', by this poor oubit's shame;
Though Pegasus may nicher loud, keep Pegasus at hame.
O haud your hands frae inkhorns, though a' the Muses woo;
For critics lie, like saumon-fry, to mak' their meals o' you.

THE STARLINGS.

EARLY in spring-time, on raw and windy mornings,
Beneath the freezing house-eaves I heard the starlings sing:
"Ah, dreary March month, is this then a time for building wearily?
Sad, sad, to think that the year is but begun."

Late in the autumn, on still and cloudless evenings,
Among the golden reed-beds I heard the starlings sing:
"Ah, that sweet March month, when we and our mates were courting merrily;
Sad, sad, to think that the year is all but done."

A FAREWELL.

MY fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast forever,
One grand, sweet song.

A LAMENT.

THE merry merry lark was up and singing,
And the hare was out and feeding on the lea;
And the merry merry bells below were ringing,
When my child's laugh rang through me.

Now the hare is snared and dead beside the snow-yard,
And the lark beside the dreary winter sea;
And the baby in his cradle in the churchyard
Sleeps sound till the bell brings me.

MARGARET TO DOLCINO.

ASK if I love thee? Oh, smiles cannot tell
Plainer what tears are now showing too well.
Had I not loved thee, my sky had been clear;
Had I not loved thee, I had not been here,
Weeping by thee.

Ask if I love thee? How else could I borrow
Pride from man's slander, and strength from my sorrow?
Laugh when they sneer at the fanatic's bride,
Knowing no bliss, save to toil and abide
Weeping by thee.

DOLCINO TO MARGARET.

THE world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again,
Sweet wife;
No, never come over again.

For woman is warm though man be cold,
And the night will hallow the day:

Digitized by Google

Till the heart which at even was weary and old
Can rise in the morning gay,
Sweet wife;
To its work in the morning gay.

THE LAST BUCCANIER.

Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high,
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish main.

There were forty craft in Avès that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small-arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh the palms grew high in Avès, and fruits that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors, a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward breeze
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be;
So the King's ships sailed on Avès, and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bull-dogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I 'm old and going—I 'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world 's so hard, I can't be worse off there:
If I might but be a sea-dove, I 'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once again.

THE WORLD'S AGE.

Who will say the world is dying?
Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from Heaven, within us lying,
Flash, and will flash till the last.
Fools! who fancy Christ mistaken;
Man a tool to buy and sell;
Earth a failure, God-forsaken,
Anteroom of hell.

Still the race of Hero-spirits
Pass the lamp from hand to hand;
Age from age the Words inherits—
"Wife, and Child, and Fatherland."
Still the youthful hunter gathers
Fiery joy from wold and wood;
He will dare as dared his fathers,
Give him cause as good.

While a slave bewails his fetters;
While an orphan pleads in vain;
While an infant lisps his letters,
Heir of all the age's gain;
While a lip grows ripe for kissing;
While a moan from man is wrung;
Know, by every want and blessing,
That the world is young.

ALTON LOCKE'S SONG

Weep, weep, weep and weep,
For pauper, dolt, and slave!
Hark! from wasted moor and fen
Feverous alley, stifling den,
Swells the wail of Saxon men—
Work! or the grave!

Down, down, down and down
With idler, knave, and tyrant!
Why for sluggards cark and moil?
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil!
God's word 's our warrant!

Up, up, up and up!
Face your game and play it!
The night is past, behold the sun!
The idols fall, the lie is done!
The Judge is set, the doom begun!
Who shall stay it?

Digitized by Google

SONGS FROM "THE WATER-BABIES."

I.

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool!
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming wear;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free;
The floodgates are open, away to the sea.
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands, and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

II.

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young!

THE KNIGHT'S LEAP.

A LEGEND OF ALTENAHR.

So the foemen have fired the gate, men of mine;
And the water is spent and gone?
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr-wine:
I never shall drink but this one.

And reach me my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him me round to the door:
He must take such a leap to-night perforce,
As horse never took before.

I have fought my fight, I have lived my life,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Cöln there was never a knight
Led a merrier life than mine.

I have lived by the saddle for years twoscore;
And if I must die on tree,
Then the old saddle-tree, which has borne me of yore,
Is the properest timber for me.

So now to show bishop, and burgher, and priest,
How the Altenahr hawk can die:
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly.

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
And he mounted his horse at the door;
And he drained such a cup of the red Ahr-wine,
As man never drained before.

He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
And he leaped him out over the wall;
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
With never a bone in him whole—
A mass or a prayer, now, good gentlemen,
For such a bold rider's soul.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1870.

Speak low, speak little: who may sing
While yonder cannon-thunders boom?
Watch, shuddering, what each day may bring:
Nor "pipe amid the crack of doom."

And yet—the pines sing overhead,
The robins by the alder-pool,
The bees about the garden-bed,
The children dancing home from school.

And ever at the loom of Birth
The mighty Mother weaves and sings:
She weaves—fresh robes for mangled earth;
She sings—fresh hopes for desperate things.

And thou, too: if through Nature's calm
Some strain of music touch thine ears,
Accept and strare that soothing balm,
And sing, though choked with pitying tears.

THE MANGO-TREE.

He wiled me through the furzy croft;
He wiled me down the sandy lane.
He told his boy's love, soft and oft,
Until I told him mine again.

We married, and we sailed the main;
A soldier, and a soldier's wife.
We marched through many a burning plain;
We sighed for many a gallant life.

Digitized by Google

But his—God keep it safe from harm!
  He toiled, and dared, and earned command.
And those three stripes upon his arm
  Were more to me than gold or land.

Sure he would win some great renown:
  Our lives were strong, our hearts were high.
One night the fever struck him down.
  I sat, and stared, and saw him die.

I had his children—one, two, three.
  One week I had them, blithe and sound;
The next—beneath this mango-tree,
  By him in barrack burying-ground.

I sit beneath the mango-shade;
  I live my five years' life all o'er—
Round yonder stems his children played;
  He mounted guard at yonder door.

'Tis I, not they, am gone and dead.
  They live; they know; they feel; they see.
Their spirits light the golden shade
  Beneath the giant mango-tree.

All things, save I, are full of life;
  The minas' pluming velvet breasts:
The monkeys, in their foolish strife;
  The swooping hawks, the swinging nests.

The lizards basking on the soil,
  The butterflies who sun their wings;
The bees about their household toil,
  They live, they love, the blissful things.

Each tender purple mango-shoot,
  That folds and droops so bashful down:
It lives; it sucks some hidden root;
  It rears at east a broad green crown.

It blossoms; and the children cry—
  "Watch when the mango-apples fall"—
It lives; but rootless, fruitless, I—
  I breathe and dream;—and that is all.

Thus am I dead: yet cannot die:
  But still within my foolish brain
There hangs a pale-blue evening sky;
  A furzy croft; a sandy lane.

MY HUNTING-SONG.

Forward! Hark, forward 's the cry!
One more fence and we 're out on the open:
So to us at once, if you want to live near us!
Hark to them, ride to them, beauties! as on they go,
Leaping and sweeping away in the vale below!
Cowards and bunglers, whose heart or whose eye is slow,
  Find themselves staring alone.

So the great cause flashes by;
Nearer and clearer its purposes open,
While louder and prouder the world-echoes cheer us.
Gentlemen sportsmen, you ought to live up to us,
Lead us, and lift us, and halloo our game to us—
We cannot call the hounds off, and no shame to us—
  Don't be left staring alone!

THE DAY OF THE LORD.

The Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand;
  Its storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold;
  All dreamers toss and sigh;
The night is darkest before the morn;
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
  And the Day of the Lord is at hand.

Gather you, gather you, angels of God—
  Freedom, and Mercy, and Truth;
Come! for the Earth is grown coward and old;
  Come down, and renew us her youth.
Wisdom, Self-sacrifice, Daring, and Love,
Haste to the battle-field, stoop from above—
  To the Day of the Lord at hand.

Gather you, gather you, hounds of hell—
  Famine, and Plague, and War:
Idleness, Bigotry, Cant, and Misrule,
  Gather, and fall in the snare!
Hireling and Mammonite, Bigot and Knave,
Crawl to the battle-field, sneak to your grave,
  In the Day of the Lord at hand.

Who would sit down and sigh for a lost age of gold,
  While the Lord of all ages is here?
True hearts will leap up at the trumpet of God,
  And those who can suffer can dare.
Each old age of gold was an iron age too,
And the meekest of saints may find stern work to do,
  In the Day of the Lord at hand.

AIRLY BEACON.

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
  While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
  Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
  With his baby on my knee!

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

MATTHEW ARNOLD was born in Laleham, Middlesex, England, December 24, 1822. He is a son of the celebrated Thomas Arnold of Rugby School. He finished his education at Oxford, where he received the Newdegate prize for a poem on "Cromwell," and in 1845 was chosen a fellow of Oriel College. From 1846 to 1851 he was private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He has published "The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems," 1849; "Balder" and "Merope, a Tragedy," 1858; "On Translating Homer," 1862; "Essays in Criticism," 1865; "Study of Celtic Literature," 1867; "Schools and Universities on the Continent," 1868; "Culture and Anarchy," 1869; "St. Paul and Protestantism," 1870; "Friendship's Garland," 1871; "Literature and Dogma," 1873; and "God and the Bible," 1875. His poems and essays have been republished in the United States.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

AND the first gray of morning filled the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream;
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hushed, and still the men were plunged in sleep.
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night along
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood,
Clustering like bee-hives, on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snow in high Pamere:
Through the black tents he passed, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crowned the top
With a clay fort. But that was fallen; and now
The Tartars built there Paran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths; and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts; and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa; it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not. All night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful; and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army marched;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou knowest if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This, too, thou knowest, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father; who, I hoped, should greet,
Should one day greet upon some well-fought field
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man. If I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke: and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and said:
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us

Digitized by Google

Unmurmuring—in our tents, while it is war;
And when 't is truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight;
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms—
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him; for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Siestan, with Zal, his father old:
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorred approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian king.
There go.—Thou wilt not? yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us—fain therefore send thee hence, in peace,
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain. But who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening? and who govern Rustum's son?
Go! I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him; and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he placed his sheep-skin cap—
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and called
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun, by this, had risen, and cleared the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands;
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain: so Haman bade—
Haman, who, next to Peran-Wisa, ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they streamed:
As when, some gray November morn, the files,
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes,
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed—southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board: so they streamed—
The Tartars of the Oxus, the king's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps, and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come,
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands—
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service owned—
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes—men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmuks and unkemped Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the pole; and wandering Kirghizes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians formed:
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seemed,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshalled battalions bright in burnished steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came
And checked his ranks, and fixed them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion, Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearlèd ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran,
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk-snow,
Winding so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air; and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel. Gudurz and Zoarrah came;
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the king;
These came and counselled; and then Gudurz said:
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth;
He has the wild-stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits,
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart:
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and said.
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."

Digitized by Google

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa turned, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And crossed the camp which lay behind, and reached,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitched. The high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's; and his men lay camped around.
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum. His morning meal was done; but still
The table stood beside him, charged with food—
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark-green melons. And there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And played with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he looked and saw him stand;
And with a cry sprang up, and dropped the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? But sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:
"Not now. A time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild-stag's foot, the lion's heart.
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose."
He spoke. But Rustum answered with a smile:
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older. If the young are weak, the king
Errs strangely; for the king, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have—
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds;
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all; and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed, lest men should say,
Like some old miser Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal? Am not I myself?
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and called
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel. The arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device;
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold;
And from the fluted spine, atop, a plume
Of horse-hair waved, a scarlet horse-hair plume.
So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Followed him, like a faithful hound, at heel—
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth—
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find,
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broidered green
Crusted with gold; and on the ground were worked
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So followed, Rustum left his tents, and crossed
The camp, and to the Persian host appeared.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hailed: but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife, who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf—
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced:
And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and came.
And as a-field the reapers cut a swathe
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare:
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling; and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

Digitized by Google

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb-blackened fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whitened window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be: so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs. Long he perused
His spirited air, and wondered who he was.
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckoned to him with his hand, and said:
"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold.
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me: I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe;
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be governed: quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die.
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly. Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum; and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand—
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Has builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streaked with its first gray hairs. Hope filled his soul;
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasped his hand within his own and said:
"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turned away, and spoke to his own soul:
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say—*Rustum is here*—
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts—
A belt or sword perhaps—and go his way.
And on a feast-day, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—
'I challenged once, when the two armies camped
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank; only Rustum dared. Then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud:
"Rise! Wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called
By challenge forth. Make good thy vaunt or yield.
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were revealed,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul—
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,
Oxus in summer, wash them all away!"
He spoke; and Sohrab answered, on his feet:
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well: did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! Thou art more vast, more dread than I;
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall;
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea—
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death—
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spake; and Rustum answered not, but hurled
His spear. Down from the shoulder, down it came—
As on some partridge in the corn, a hawk,
That long has towered in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet. Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash. The spear
Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide. Then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield. Sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield—an unlapped trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough; like those which men, in treeless plains,
To build them boats, fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter time
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,

Digitized by Google

Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leaped from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum followed his own blow and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand.
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his sword;
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:
"Thou strik'st too hard; that club of thine will float
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth; not wroth am I.
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou sayest thou art not Rustum; be it so.
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men:
But never was my heart thus touched before.
Are they from heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends;
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
May'st fight: fight them, when they confront thy spear.
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceased. But while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage. His club
He left to lie, but had regained his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right hand
Blazed bright and baleful—like that autumn star,
The baleful sign of fevers. Dust had soiled
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.
His breast heaved; his lips foamed; and twice his voice
Was choked with rage. At last these words broke way:
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight! let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war. I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning; all the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts,
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword. At once they rushed
Together; as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west. Their shields
Dashed with a clang together; and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees; such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.
And you would say that the sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and darkened the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath. First Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out. The steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin;
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away; and that proud horse-hair plume,
Never till now defiled, sunk to the dust;
And Rustum bowed his head. But then the gloom
Grew blacker; thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry.
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pained desert lion, who all day
Has trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard the cry, and quaked for fear;
And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not—but rushed on.
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed
His head. But this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in his hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted "Rustum!" Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed; back he recoiled one step,
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewildered; and he dropped
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.

Digitized by Google

He reeled, and, staggering back, sunk to the ground.
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then with a bitter smile, Rustum began:
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent;
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And with a fearless mien Sohrab replied:
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I matched with ten such men as thou,
And I were he who till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfixed an unarmed foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man—tremble to hear!
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken—
A heap of fluttering feathers. Never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream, as she sails by.
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear—
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee—
Fierce man, bethink thee—for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!
Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should take the boy, to train in arms;
And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deemed he; yet he listened, plunged in thought;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon. Tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture. As, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain lodge descries
A far bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wondering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand.
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener had been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass: so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved!
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son. One child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us;
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now

Digitized by Google

The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die.
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:
"Man, who art thou, who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men;
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke: and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;
And his knees tottered; and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailèd hand,
That the hard iron corslet clanked aloud;
And to his heart he pressed the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak, hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And showed a sign in faint vermilion points
Pricked. As a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift; at early morn he paints,
And all day long; and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands:
So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab's arm—the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old reared Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks.
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved;
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that figure on his arm,
And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes.
And then he touched it with his hand and said:
"How sayest thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke: but Rustum gazed and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry—
"O boy—thy father!"—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips,
And with fond, faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life. And life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair—
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong, convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands;
And with a soothing voice he spoke, and said:
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom that at my birth was written down
In heaven, and thou art heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it. But fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this—I find
My father; let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say, 'My son!'
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in heaven that this should be."
So said he: and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kissed him. And awe fell on both the hosts
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe,
First to the one, then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big, warm tears rolled down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should then have rotted on thy nimble joints,
When first they bore thy master to this field."
But Sohrab looked upon the horse and said:
"Is this then Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed—
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuffed the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seïstan,
And seen the river of Helmund, and the lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food—
Corn in a golden platter soaked with wine—
And said—'O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!' But I
Have never known my grandsire's furrowed face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seïstan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream—
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
And, with a heavy groan, Rustum replied:
"Oh that its waves were flowing over me!

Digitized by Google

Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
And, with a grave, mild voice, Sohrab replied:
"Desire not that, my father! Thou must live;
For some are born to do great deeds, and live;
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them—what have they done?
They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace,
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seïstan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me—
Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends,
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all;
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and say:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill—
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me
And carry thee away to Seïstan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all;
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave;
And I will spare thy host—yea, let them go—
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive—my bitterest foes,
And they who were called champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown;
So thou mightest live too, my son—my son!
Or rather, would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine; and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seïstan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say—*O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!—
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age;
And I shall never end this life of blood."
Then at the point of death, Sohrab replied:
"A life of blood, indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet. But thou shalt have it on that day
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt, blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."
And Rustum gazed on Sohrab's face, and said:
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke: and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish. But the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream; all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now, and soiled—
Like the soiled tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gathered, on their native bank
By romping children, whom their nurses call
From the hot fields at noon. His head drooped low;
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he opened them,
And fixed them feebly on his father's face.
Till now all strength was ebbed, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-reared
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain-side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward; the Tartars by the river marge.
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon. He flowed
Right for the polar star, past Orgunje,
Brimming, and bright, and large. Then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents—that for many a league
The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand, and matted, rushy isles—
Oxus forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere—
A foiled, circuitous wanderer. Till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

Digitized by Google

PHILOMELA.

HARK! ah, the nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark—what pain!
O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still—after many years, in distant lands—
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain [pain—
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, Old-World
Say, will it never heal!
And can this fragrant lawn,
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse,
With hot cheeks and seared eyes,
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more essay
Thy flight; and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive! the feathery change;
Once more; and once more make resound,
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephisian vale?

Listen, Eugenia— [the leaves!
How thick the bursts come crowding through
Again—thou hearest!
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

EXCUSE.

I TOO have suffered. Yet I know
She is not cold, though she seems so;
She is not cold, she is not light;
But our ignoble souls lack might.

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,
While we for hopeless passion die;
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,
Were but men nobler than they are.

Eagerly once her gracious ken
Was turned upon the sons of men;
But light the serious visage grew—
She looked, and smiled, and saw them through.

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our labored puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
Scorn them as bitterly as she!

Yet oh, that Fate would let her see
One of some worthier race than we—
One for whose sake she once might prove
How deeply she who scorns can love.

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe!

And she to him will reach her hand,
And gazing in his eyes will stand,
And know her friend, and weep for glee,
And cry—Long, long I've looked for thee!

Then will she weep—with smiles, till then
Coldly she mocks the sons of men.
Till then her lovely eyes maintain
Their gay, unwavering, deep disdain.

INDIFFERENCE.

I MUST not say that thou wert true,
Yet let me say that thou wert fair;
And they that lovely face who view,
They will not ask if truth be there.

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts
Wounded by men, by fortune tried,
Outwearied with their lonely parts,
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear;
Their lot was but to weep and moan.
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,
For neither could subsist alone!

But souls whom some benignant breath
Has charmed at birth from gloom and care,
These ask no love—these plight no faith,
For they are happy as they are.

The world to them may homage make,
And garlands for their forehead weave;
And what the world can give, they take—
But they bring more than they receive.

They smile upon the world; their ears
To one demand alone are coy.
They will not give us love and tears—
They bring us light, and warmth, and joy.

It was not love that heaved thy breast,
Fair child! it was the bliss within.
Adieu! and say that one, at least,
Was just to what he did not win.

CALAIS SANDS.

A THOUSAND knights have reined their steeds
To watch this line of sand-hills run,
Along the never-silent Strait,
To Calais glittering in the sun.

To look toward Ardres' Golden Field
Across this wide aërial plain,
Which glows as if the Middle Age
Were gorgeous upon earth again.

O that to share this famous scene
I saw, upon the open sand,
Thy lovely presence at my side,
Thy shawl, thy look, thy smile, thy hand!

How exquisite thy voice would come,
My darling, on this lonely air!
How sweetly would the fresh sea-breeze
Shake loose some lock of soft brown hair!

Digitized by Google

But now my glance but once hath roved
O'er Calais and its famous plain;
To England's cliffs my gaze is turned,
O'er the blue Strait mine eyes I strain.

Thou comest! Yes the vessel's cloud
Hangs dark upon the rolling sea!—
O that yon sea-bird's wings were mine,
To win one instant's glimpse of thee!

I must not spring to grasp thy hand,
To woo thy smile, to seek thine eye;
But I may stand far off, and gaze,
And watch thee pass unconscious by,

And spell thy looks, and guess thy thoughts,
Mixed with the idlers on the pier.—
Ah, might I always rest unseen,
So I might have thee always near!

To-morrow hurry through the fields
Of Flanders to the storied Rhine!
To-night those soft-fringed eyes shall close
Beneath one roof, my queen! with mine.

DOVER BEACH.

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast, the light
Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanched sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

THE TERRACE AT BERNE.

Ten years!—and to my waking eye
Once more the roofs of Berne appear;
The rocky banks, the terrace high,
The stream—and do I linger here?

The clouds are on the Oberland,
The Jungfrau snows look faint and far;
But bright are those green fields at hand,
And through those fields comes down the Aar,

And from the blue twin lakes it comes,
Flows by the town, the churchyard fair,
And 'neath the garden-walk it hums,
The house—and is my Marguerite there?

Ah, shall I see thee, while a flush
Of startled pleasure floods thy brow,
Quick through the oleanders brush,
And clap thy hands, and cry, "*'T is thou!*"

Or hast thou long since wandered back,
Daughter of France! to France, thy home;
And flitted down the flowery track
Where feet like thine too lightly come?

Doth riotous laughter now replace
Thy smile, and rouge, with stony glare,
Thy cheek's soft hue, and fluttering lace
The kerchief that enwound thy hair?

Or is it over?—art thou dead?—
Dead?—and no warning shiver ran
Across my heart, to say thy thread
Of life was cut, and closed thy span!

Could from earth's ways that figure slight
Be lost, and I not feel 't was so?
Of that fresh voice the gay delight
Fail from earth's air, and I not know?

Or shall I find thee still, but changed,
But not the Marguerite of thy prime?
With all thy being rearranged,
Passed through the crucible of time;

With spirit vanished, beauty waned,
And hardly yet a glance, a tone,
A gesture—anything—retained
Of all that was my Marguerite's own?

I will not know!—for wherefore try
To things by mortal course that live
A shadowy durability
For which they were not meant, to give?

Like driftwood spars which meet and pass
Upon the boundless ocean-plain,
So on the sea of life, alas!
Man nears man, meets, and leaves again.

I knew it when my life was young,
I feel it still, now youth is o'er!
The mists are on the mountains hung,
And Marguerite I shall see no more.

Digitized by Google

SYDNEY DOBELL.

SYDNEY DOBELL was born at Peckham Rye, near London, on the 5th of April, 1824. His father was a wine-merchant. The family removed to Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in 1835, and a year later Sydney became a clerk in his father's counting-room, where he spent twelve years. He was educated entirely at home, began to write verse at the age of nine, and gave all his leisure to literature. He married in 1844, and four years afterward settled at Leckhampton, in the Cotswold Hills. In 1850 he published "The Roman," a dramatic poem, under the *nom de plume* of "Sydney Yendys," and soon after he went with his wife to Switzerland. There he wrote "Balder," another dramatic poem, published in 1854. The Dobells spent several successive summers in the Scottish Highlands, where they became intimate with Alexander Smith, and in 1855 Dobell and he published together a volume of "Sonnets on the War." Dobell's best book of poems, "England in Time of War," appeared in 1856. He lectured in Edinburgh, on "The Nature of Poetry," in 1857, and a bronchial irritation which attacked him after the lecture caused his physician to order his immediate removal to the south. He resided for a year in the Isle of Wight, and then leased Cleeve Tower, an ancient structure near the highest point of the Cotswolds, where he spent the remainder of his life, and died on August 24, 1874. He published a volume of lyrics, "England's Day," in 1871. A posthumous collection of his prose writings is announced. Dobell was a shrewd man of business, and expert at riding, fishing, rowing, and other athletic sports, of which he was very fond.

HOW 'S MY BOY?

"Ho, sailor of the sea!
How 's my boy—my boy?"
"What 's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sailed he?"

"My boy John—
He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy 's my boy to me.

"You come back from sea,
And not know my John?
I might as well have asked some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There 's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How 's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know,
I 'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the 'Jolly Briton'"—

"Speak low, woman, speak low!"
"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I 'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How 's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor?
I was never aboard her.
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I 'll be bound,
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how 's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."
"How 's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?
I 'm not their mother—
How 's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How 's my boy—my boy?"

HOME, WOUNDED.

WHEEL me into the sunshine,
Wheel me into the shadow,
There must be leaves on the woodbine,
Is the king-cup crowned in the meadow?

Wheel me down to the meadow
Down to the little river,
In sun or in shadow
I shall not dazzle or shiver,
I shall be happy anywhere,
Every breath of the morning air
Makes me throb and quiver.

Stay wherever you will,
By the mount or under the hill,

Digitized by Google

Or down by the little river:
Stay as long as you please,
Give me only a bud from the trees,
Or a blade of grass in morning dew,
Or a cloudy violet clearing to blue,
I could look on it forever.

Wheel, wheel through the sunshine,
Wheel, wheel through the shadow;
There must be odors round the pine,
There must be balm of breathing kine,
Somewhere down in the meadow.
Must I choose? Then anchor me there
Beyond the beckoning poplars, where
The larch is snooding her flowery hair
With wreaths of morning shadow.

Among the thickest hazels of the brake
Perchance some nightingale doth shake
His feathers, and the air is full of song;
In those old days when I was young and strong,
He used to sing on yonder garden tree,
Beside the nursery.
Ah, I remember how I loved to wake,
And find him singing on the self-same bough
(I know it even now)
Where, since the flit of bat,
In ceaseless voice he sat,
Trying the spring night over, like a tune,
Beneath the vernal moon;
And while I listed long,
Day rose, and still he sang,
And all his stanchless song,
As something falling unaware,
Fell out of the tall trees he sang among,
Fell ringing down the ringing morn, and rang—
Rang like a golden jewel down a golden stair.

My soul lies out like a basking hound—
A hound that dreams and dozes;
Along my life my length I lay,
I fill to-morrow and yesterday,
I am warm with the suns that have long since set,
I am warm with the summers that are not yet,
And like one who dreams and dozes
Softly afloat on a sunny sea,
Two worlds are whispering over me,
And there blows a wind of roses
From the backward shore to the shore before,
From the shore before to the backward shore,
And like two clouds that meet and pour
Each through each, till core in core
A single self reposes,
The nevermore with the evermore
Above me mingles and closes;
As my soul lies out like the basking hound,
And wherever it lies seems happy ground,
And when, awakened by some sweet sound,
A dreamy eye uncloses,
I see a blooming world around,
And I lie amid primroses—
Years of sweet primroses,
Springs of fresh primroses,
Springs to be, and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

O to lie a-dream, a-dream,
To feel I may dream and to know you deem
My work is done forever,
And the palpitating fever,
That gains and loses, loses and gains,
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a thousand pains,
Cooled at once by that blood-let
Upon the parapet;
And all the tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long endeavor
Solved and quit by no more fine
Than these limbs of mine,
Spanned and measured once for all
By that right hand I lost,
Bought up at so light a cost
As one bloody fall
On the soldier's bed,
And three days on the ruined wall
Among the thirstless dead.

O to think my name is crossed
From duty's muster-roll;
That I may slumber though the clarion call,
And live the joy of an embodied soul
Free as a liberated ghost!
O to feel a life of deed
Was emptied out to feed
That fire of pain that burned so brief awhile—
That fire from which I come, as the dead come
Forth from the irreparable tomb,
Or as a martyr on his funeral pile
Heaps up the burdens other men do bear
Through years of segregated care,
And takes the total load
Upon his shoulders broad,
And steps from earth to God!

O to think, through good or ill,
Whatever I am you 'll love me still;
O to think, though dull I be,
You that are so grand and free,
You that are so bright and gay,
Will pause to hear me when I will,
As though my head were gray;
And though there 's little I can say,
Each will look kind with honor while he hears.
And to your loving ears
My thoughts will halt with honorable scars,
And when my dark voice stumbles with the weight
Of what it doth relate
(Like that blind comrade—blinded in the wars—
Who bore the one-eyed brother that was lame),
You 'll remember 't is the same
That cried "Follow me,"
Upon a summer's day;
And I shall understand with unshed tears
This great reverence that I see,
And bless the day—and thee,
Lord God of victory!

And she,
Perhaps, O even she
May look as she looked when I knew her
In those old days of childish sooth,
Ere my boyhood dared to woo her.
I will not seek nor sue her,
For I 'm neither fonder nor truer
Than when she slighted my lovelorn youth,
My giftless, graceless, guinealess truth,

Digitized by Google

And I only lived to rue her.
But I 'll never love another,
And, in spite of her lovers and lands,
She shall love me yet, my brother!

As a child that holds by his mother,
While his mother speaks his praises,
Holds with eager hands,
And ruddy and silent stands
In the ruddy and silent daisies,
And hears her bless her boy,
And lifts a wondering joy,
So I 'll not seek nor sue her,
But I 'll leave my glory to woo her,
And I 'll stand like a child beside,
And from behind the purple pride
I 'll lift my eyes unto her,
And I shall not be denied.
And you will love her, brother dear,
And perhaps next year you 'll bring me here
All through the balmy April tide,
And she will trip like Spring by my side,
And be all the birds to my ear.
And here all three we 'll sit in the sun,
And see the Aprils one by one,
Primrosed Aprils on and on,
Till the floating prospect closes
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,
And perhaps are gleams of Paradise,
And perhaps too far for mortal eyes,
New springs of fresh primroses,
Springs of earth's primroses,
Springs to be and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

A NUPTIAL EVE.

Oh, happy, happy maid,
In the year of war and death
She wears no sorrow!
By her face so young and fair,
By the happy wreath
That rules her happy hair,
She might be a bride to-morrow!
She sits and sings within her moonlit bower,
Her moonlit bower in rosy June,
Yet ah, her bridal breath,
Like fragrance from some sweet night-blowing flower,
Moves from her moving lips in many a mournful tune!
She sings no song of love's despair,
She sings no lover lowly laid,
No fond peculiar grief
Has ever touched or bud or leaf
Of her unblighted spring.
She sings because she needs must sing;
She sings the sorrow of the air
Whereof her voice is made.
That night in Britain howsoe'er
On any chords the fingers strayed
They gave the notes of care.
A dim sad legend old
Long since in some pale shade
Of some far twilight told,
She knows not when or where,
She sings, with trembling hand on trembling lute-strings laid:

The murmur of the morning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
"O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!"

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And through the silver meads!

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode through the Monday morn;

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine!
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says naught that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'T is not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

TOMMY 'S DEAD.

You may give over plough, boys,
You may take the gear to the stead,
All the sweat o' your brow, boys,
Will never get beer and bread.
The seed 's waste, I know, boys,
There 's not a blade will grow, boys,
'T is cropped out, I trow, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

Send the colt to fair, boys,
He 's going blind, as I said,

Digitized by Google

My old eyes can't bear, boys,
To see him in the shed;
The cow 's dry and spare, boys,
She 's neither here nor there, boys,
I doubt she 's badly bred;
Stop the mill to-morn, boys,
There 'll be no more corn, boys,
Neither white nor red;
There 's no sign of grass, boys,
You may sell the goat and the ass, boys,
The land 's not what it was, boys,
And the beasts must be fed:
You may turn Peg away, boys,
You may pay off old Ned,
We 've had a dull day, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

Move my chair on the floor, boys,
Let me turn my head:
She 's standing there in the door, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Take her away from me, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Move me round in my place, boys,
Let me turn my head,
Take her away from me, boys,
As she lay on her death-bed,
The bones of her thin face, boys,
As she lay on her death-bed!
I don't know how it be, boys,
When all 's done and said,
But I see her looking at me, boys,
Wherever I turn my head;
Out of the big oak-tree, boys,
Out of the garden-bed,
And the lily as pale as she, boys,
And the rose that used to be red.

There 's something not right, boys,
But I think its not in my head,
I 've kept my precious sight, boys—
The Lord be hallowed!
Outside and in
The ground is cold to my tread,
The hills are wizen and thin,
The sky is shrivelled and shred,
The hedges down by the loan
I can count them bone by bone,
The leaves are open and spread,
But I see the teeth of the land,
And hands like a dead man's hand,
And the eyes of a dead man's head.
There 's nothing but cinders and sand,
The rat and the mouse have fed,
And the summer 's empty and cold;
Over valley and wold
Wherever I turn my head
There 's a mildew and a mould,
The sun 's going out overhead,
And I 'm very old,
And Tommy 's dead.

What am I staying for, boys?
You 're all born and bred,
'T is fifty years and more, boys,
Since wife and I were wed,
And she 's gone before, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

She was always sweet, boys,
Upon his curly head,
She knew she 'd never see 't, boys,
And she stole off to bed;
I 've been sitting up alone, boys,
For he 'd come home, he said,
But it 's time I was gone, boys,
For Tommy 's dead.

Put the shutters up, boys,
Bring out the beer and bread,
Make haste and sup, boys,
For my eyes are heavy as lead;
There 's something wrong i' the cup, boys,
There 's something ill wi' the bread,
I do n't care to sup, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

I 'm not right, I doubt, boys,
I 've such a sleepy head,
I shall never more be stout, boys,
You may carry me to bed.
What are you about, boys,
The prayers are all said,
The fire 's raked out, boys,
And Tommy 's dead?

The stairs are too steep, boys,
You may carry me to the head,
The night 's dark and deep, boys,
Your mother 's long in bed,
'T is time to go to sleep, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

I 'm not used to kiss, boys,
You may shake my hand instead.
All things go amiss, boys,
You may lay me where she is, boys,
And I 'll rest my old head:
'T is a poor world, this, boys,
And Tommy 's dead.

DESOLATE.

From the sad eaves the drip-drop of the rain!
The water washing at the latchel door;
A slow step plashing by upon the moor;
A single bleat far from the famished fold;
The clicking of an embered hearth and cold;
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

"So as it is with thee
Is it with me,
So as it is and it used not to be,
With thee used not to be,
Nor me."
So singeth Robin on the willow-tree,
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.
Here in this breast all day
The fire is dim and low,
Within I care not to stay,
Without I care not to go.

A sadness ever sings
Of unforgotten things,
And the bird of love is patting at the pane;
But the wintry water deepens at the door,
And a step is plashing by upon the moor
Into the dark upon the darkening moor,
And alas, alas, the drip-drop of the rain!

Digitized by Google

FAREWELL.

Can I see thee stand
On the looming land?
Dost thou wave with thy white hand
Farewell, farewell?
I could think that thou art near,
Thy sweet voice is in mine ear,
Farewell, farewell!
While I listen, all things seem
Singing in a singing dream,
Farewell, farewell!
Echoing in an echoing dream,
Farewell, farewell!

Yon boat upon the sea,
It floats 'twixt thee and me,
I see the boatman listless lie;
He cannot hear the cry
That in mine ears doth ring
Farewell, farewell!
Doth it pass him o'er and o'er,
Heard upon the shore behind,
Farewell, farewell!
Heard upon the ship before,
Farewell, farewell!
Like an arrow that can dart
Viewless through the viewless wind,
Plain on the quivering string,
And plain in the victim's heart?

Are there voices in the sky,
Farewell, farewell?
Am I mocked by the bright air;
Farewell, farewell?
The empty air that everywhere
Silvers back the sung reply,
Farewell, farewell!
While to and fro the tremulous accents fly,
Farewell, farewell!
Now shown, now shy,
Farewell, farewell!
Now song, now sigh,
Farewell, farewell!
Toy with the grasping heart that deems them nigh,
Come like blown bells in sudden wind and high,
Or far on farthest verge in lingering echoes die,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

O Love! what strange dumb Fate
Hath broken into voice to see us hope?
Surely we part to meet again?
Like one struck blind, I grope
In vain, in vain;
I cannot hold a single sense to tell
The meaning of this melancholy bell,
Farewell, farewell!
I touch them with my thought, and small and great
They join the swaying swell,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Ay, when I felt thee falling
On this heaving breast—
Ay, when I felt thee pressed
Nearer, nearer, nearer,
Dearer, dearer, dearer—
Ay while I saw thy face,
In that long last embrace,
The first, the last, the best—
Ay while I held thee heart to heart,
My soul had pushed off from the shore,
And we were far apart;
I heard her calling, calling,
From the sea of nevermore—
Farewell, farewell!
Fainter, fainter, like a bell
Rung from some receding ship,
Farewell, farewell!
The far and farther knell
Did hardly reach my lip,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!
Away, you omens vain!
Away, away!
What! will you not be driven?
My heart is trembling to your augury.
Hence! Like a flight of sea-birds at a gun,
A thousand ways they scatter back to heaven,
Wheel lessening out of sight, and swoop again as one!
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

O Love! what fatal spell
Is winding, winding round me to this singing?
What hands unseen are flinging
The tightening mesh that I can feel too well?
What viewless wings are winging
The siren music of this passing bell?
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Arouse my heart! arouse!
This is the sea: I strike these wooden walls:
The sailors come and go at my command:
I lift this cable with my hand:
I loose it and it falls:
Arouse! she is not lost,
Thou art not plighted to a moonlight ghost,
But to a living spouse.
Arouse! we only part to meet again!
O thou moody main,
Are thy mermaid cells a-ringing?
Are thy mermaid sisters singing?
The saddest shell of every cell
Ringing still, and ringing
Farewell, farewell!
To the sinking sighing singing,
To the floating flying singing,
To the deepening dying singing,
In the swell,
Farewell, farewell!
And the failing wailing ringing,
The reaming dreaming ringing
Of fainter shell in deeper cell,
To the sunken sunken singing,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Digitized by Google

THE MILKMAID'S SONG.

Turn, turn, for my cheeks they burn,
Turn by the dale, my Harry!
Fill pail, fill pail,
He has turned by the dale,
And there by the stile waits Harry.
Fill fill,
Fill pail, fill,
For there by the stile waits Harry!
The world may go round, the world may stand still,
But I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh!
Oh, if we two
Stood down there now by the water,
I know who 'd carry me over the ford
As brave as a soldier, as proud as a lord,
Though I don't live over the water.
Wheugh, wheugh! he 's whistling through,
He 's whistling "the farmer's daughter."
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown!
He shall not take the road to the town,
For I 'll meet him beyond the water.
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown!
And send me to my Harry.
The folk o' towns
May have silken gowns,
But I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh! he has whistled through,
He has whistled through the water.
Fill, fill, with a will, a will,
For he 's whistled through the water,
And he 's whistling down
The way to the town,
And it 's not "the farmer's daughter!"
Churr, churr! goes the cockchafer,
The sun sets over the water,
Churr, churr! goes the cockchafer,
I 'm too late for my Harry!
And, oh, if he goes a-soldiering,
The cows they may low, the bells they may ring,
But I 'll neither milk nor marry,
Fillpail,
Neither milk nor marry.

My brow beats on thy flank, Fillpail,
Give down, good wench, give down!
I know the primrose bank, Fillpail,
Between him and the town.
Give down, good wench, give down, Fillpail,
And he shall not reach the town!
Strain, strain! he 's whistling again,
He 's nearer by half a mile.
More, more! Oh, never before
Were you such a weary while!
Fill, fill! he 's crossed the hill,
I can see him down by the stile,
He 's passed the hay, he 's coming this way,
He 's coming to me, my Harry!
Give silken gowns to the folk o' towns,
He 's coming to me, my Harry!
There 's not so grand a dame in the land,
That she walks to-night with Harry!
Come late, come soon, some sun, come moon,
Oh, I can milk and marry,
Fillpail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh! he has whistled through,
My Harry! my lad! my lover!
Set the sun and fall the dew,
Heigho, merry world, what 's to do
That you 're smiling over and over?
Up on the hill and down in the dale,
And along the tree-tops over the vale,
Shining over and over,
Low in the grass and high on the bough,
Shining over and over,
O world, have you ever a lover?
You were so dull and cold just now,
O world, have you ever a lover?
I could not see a leaf on the tree,
And now I could count them, one, two, three,
Count them over and over,
Leaf from leaf like lips apart,
Like lips apart for a lover.
And the hill-side beats with my beating heart,
And the apple-tree blushes all over,
And the May-bough touched me and made me start,
And the wind breathes warm like a lover.

Pull, pull! and the pail is full,
And milking 's done and over.
Who would not sit here under the tree?
What a fair fair thing 's a green field to see!
Brim, brim, to the rim, ah me!
I have set my pail on the daisies!
It seems so light—can the sun be set?
The dews must be heavy, my cheeks are wet,
I could cry to have hurt the daisies!
Harry is near, Harry is near,
My heart 's as sick as if he were here,
My lips are burning, my cheeks are wet,
He has 'nt uttered a word as yet,
But the air 's astir with his praises,
My Harry!
The air 's astir with your praises.

He has scaled the rock by the pixy's stone,
He 's among the kingcups—he picks me one,
I love the grass that I tread upon
When I go to my Harry!
He has jumped the brook, he has climbed the knowe,
There 's never a faster foot I know,
But still he seems to tarry.
O Harry! O Harry! my love, my pride,
My heart is leaping, my arms are wide!
Roll up, roll up, you dull hill-side,
Roll up, and bring my Harry!
They may talk of glory over the sea,
But Harry 's alive, and Harry 's for me,
My love, my lad, my Harry!
Come spring, come winter, come sun, come snow,
What cares Dolly, whether or no,
While I can milk and marry?
Right or wrong, and wrong or right,
Quarrel who quarrel, and fight who fight,

Digitized by Google

But I 'll bring my pail home every night
To love, and home, and Harry!
We 'll drink our can, we 'll eat our cake,
There 's beer in the barrel, there 's bread in the bake,
The world may sleep, the world may wake,
But I shall milk and marry,
And marry,
I shall milk and marry.

THE GERMAN LEGION.

In the cot beside the water,
In the white cot by the water,
The white cot by the white water,
There they laid the German maid.

There they wound her, singing round her,
Deftly wound her, singing round her,
Softly wound her, singing round her,
In a shroud like a cloud.

And they decked her as they wound her,
With a wreath of leaves they bound her,
Lornest leaves they scattered round her,
Singing grief with every leaf.

Singing grief with every leaf,
Sadder grief with sadder leaf,
Sweeter leaf with sweeter grief,
So 't was sung in a dark tongue.

Like a latter lily lying,
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And autumn vapors crying,
Pale and cold on misty mould,

So I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Through the dim woe slowly slowly,
Said and sung in that dark tongue.

Such an awe her beauty lent her,
While they sung I dared not enter
That charmed ring where she was centre,
But I stood with stirring blood

Till the song fell like a billow,
And I saw them leave her pillow,
And go forth to the far willow,
For the wreath of virgin death.

And I stood beside her pillow,
While they plucked the distant willow
And my heart rose like a billow
As I said to the pale dead:

"Oh, thou most fair and sweet virginity,
Of whom this heart that beats for thee doth know
Nor name nor story, that these limbs can be
For no man evermore, that thou must go
Cold to the cold, and that no eye shall see
That which thine unsolved womanhood doth owe
Of the incommunicable mystery,
Shakes me with tears. I could kneel down by thee
And o'er thy chill unmarriageable rest
Cry, 'Thou who shalt no more at all be pressed
To any heart, one moment come to this!
And feel me weeping with thy want of bliss,
And all the unpraised beauties of thy breast—
Thy breast which never shall a lover kiss!'"

Then I slowly left her pillow,
For they came back with the willow,
And my heart sinks as a billow
Doth implore toward the shore.

As I see the crown they weave her,
And I know that I must leave her,
And I feel that I could grieve her
Sad and sore for evermore.

And again they sang around her,
In a richer robe they wound her,
With the willow-wreath they bound her,
And the loud song like a cloud

Of golden obscuration,
With the strange tongue of her nation,
Filled the house of lamentation,
Till she lay in melody,

Like a latter lily lying,
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And the autumn vapors crying,
In a dream of evening gleam.

And I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Through the dim woe slowly slowly
Said and sung in a dark tongue.

In the cot beside the water,
The white cot by the white water,
English cot by English water
That shall see the German sea.

THE YOUNG MAN'S SONG.

At last the curse has run its date!
The heavens grow clear above,
And on the purple plains of Hate,
We 'll build the throne of Love!

One great heroic reign divine,
Shall mock the elysian isles,
And Love in arms shall only shine
Less fair than Love in smiles!

Old Clio, burn thine ancient scroll,
The scroll of Rome and Greece!
Our war shall be a parable
On all the texts of peace,

And saints look down, with eyes of praise,
Where on our modern field
The new Samaritan forelays
The wrongs that other healed!

What virtue is beyond our prize?
What deed beneath yon sun
More Godlike than the prodigies
We mortal men have done?

Digitized by Google

We wearied of the lagging steed,
The dove had not a quill
To fledge the imaginable speed
Of our wild shaft of will;

"Ah, could each word be winged with wind,
And speech be swift as sight!"
We cursed the long arms of that blind
Dumb herald on the height,

Dark struggling with a mystery
He daily hid in shades,
As a ghost steams up on the eye,
Begins a Fate and fades.

"If, like a man, dull space could hear!
If, like a man, obey!"
We seized this earthly hemisphere,
This senseless skull of clay.

We drew from Heaven a breath of flame,
And through the lifeless whole
Did breathe it till the orb became
One brain of burning soul.

As he o'er whom a tyrant reigns,
It waits our sovran word,
And thinks along the living veins
The lightnings of its lord!

What force can meet our matchless might?
What Power is not our slave?
We bound the angel of the light,
We scourged him in a cave.

And when we saw the prisoner pine
For his immortal land,
We wrung a ransom, half divine,
From that celestial hand

Whose skill the heavy chain subdued,
And all a captive's woe
Did tame to such a tempered good
As mortal eyes can know.

Who comes, who comes, o'er mountains laid,
Vales lifted, straightened ways?
'T is he! the mightier horse we made
To serve our nobler days!

But now, unheard, I saw afar
His cloud of windy mane,
Now, level as a blazing star,
He thunders through the plain!

The life he needs, the food he loves,
This cold earth bears no more;
He fodders on the eternal groves
That heard the dragons roar,

Strong with the feast he roars and runs,
And, in his maw unfurled,
Evolves the folded fires of suns
That lit a grander world!

Yon bird, the swiftest in the sky,
Before him sprang, but he
Has passed her as the wind goes by
A struggler in the sea.

With forward beak and forward blows
She slides back from his side;
While ever as the monster goes,
With needless power and pride,

Disdainful from his fiery jaws
He snorts his vital heat,
And, easy as his shadow, draws,
Long-drawn, the living street.

He 's gone! Methinks that over him,
Like Curtius in the abyss,
I see great gulfs close rim to rim,
And Past and Future kiss!

O Man! as from the flood sublime
Some Alp rose calm and slow,
So, from the exhaling floods of time
I see thy stature grow.

Long since thy royal brow, uncrowned,
Allegiant Nature saw,
Long since thine eye of empire frowned
The heavenly thrones to awe;

And now the monarch's breast apart
Divides the sinking spray,
Fit dome for such gigantic heart
As warms so vast a sway.

Far o'er the watery wilds I see
Thy great right-arm upsurge,
Thy right-hand, armed with victory,
Is sunburst on the verge!

Arise, arise! O sword! and sweep
One universal morn!
Another throe, thou laboring Deep,
And all the god is born!

So sang a youth of glorious blood.
Below, the wind-hawk shook her wings,
And lower, in its kingdom, stood
A tower of ancient kings.

Above, the autumn sky was blue,
Far round the golden world was fair,
And, gun by gun, the ramparts blew
A battle on the air.

THE WIDOW'S LULLABY.

She droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy
Willie!"

The sun comes up from the lea,
As he who will never come more
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furled her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy
Willie!"

Digitized by Google

The sun goes down in the sea,
As he who will never go more
Went down that last day from her door,
When the ship set her sails from the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!"

The year comes glad o'er the lea,
As he who will never come more,
Never, ah never!
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furled her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.
Never, ah never!
He who will come again, never!

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!"

The year goes sad to the sea,
As he who will never go more
For ever went down from her door,
Ever, for ever!
When the ship set her sails by the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.
Ever, for ever!
For ever went down from her door.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!"

A gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay!
High and low, low and high, in the sun,
There's a boat, a boat on the bay!
High and low, low and high, in the sun,
All as she saw it that day,
When he came who shall never come more,
And the ship furled her sails by the shore.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!"

All as she saw it that day,
With a gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay,
And they run, and they ride, and they run,
Merry, merry, merry, down the merry highway,
To the boat, high and low in the sun.

Nearer and nearer she hears the rolling drum,
Clearer and clearer she hears the cry, "They come,"
Far and near runs the cheer to her ear once so dear,
Merry, merry, merry, up the merry highway,
As it ran when he came that day
And said, "Wilt thou be my dearie?
Oh, wilt thou be my dearie?
My boat is dry in the bay,
And I'll love till thou be weary!"
And she could not say him nay,
For his bonny eyes o' blue,
And never was true-love so true,
To never so kind a dearie,
As he who will never love more,
When the ship furls her sails by the shore.

Then she shakes like a wind-stricken lily,
"Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht, whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!"

AN EVENING DREAM.

I'M leaning where you loved to lean in eventides of old,
The sun has sunk an hour ago behind the treeless wold,
In this old oriel that we loved how oft I sit forlorn,
Gazing, gazing, up the vale of green and waving corn.
The summer corn is in the ear, thou knowest what I see
Up the long wide valley, and from seldom tree to tree,
The serried corn, the serried corn, the green and serried corn,
From the golden morn till night, from the moony night till morn.
I love it, morning, noon, and night, in sunshine and in rain,
For being here it seems to say, "The lost come back again."
And being here as green and fair as those old fields we knew,
It says, "The lost when they come back, come back unchanged and true."
But more than at the shout of morn, or in the sleep of noon,
Smiling with a smiling star, or wan beneath a wasted moon,
I love it, soldier-brother! at this weird dim hour, for then
The serried ears are swords and spears, and the fields are fields of men.
Rank on rank in faultless phalanx stern and still I can discern,
Phalanx after faultless phalanx in dumb armies still and stern;
Army on army, host on host, till the bannered nations stand,
As the dead may stand for judgment silent on the o'er-peopled land.
Not a bayonet stirs; down sinks the awful twilight, dern and dun,
On an age that waits its leader, on a world that waits the sun.
Then your dog—I know his voice—cries from out the court-yard nigh,
And my love too well interprets all that long and mournful cry!
In my passion that thou art not, lo! I see thee as thou art,
And the pitying fancy brings thee to assuage the anguished heart.

Digitized by Google

"O my brother!" and my bosom's throb of welcome at the word,
Claps a hundred thousand hands, and all my legions hail thee lord.
And the vast unmotioned myriads, front to front, as at a breath,
Live and move to martial music, down the devious dance of death.
Ah, thou smilest, scornful brother, at a maiden's dream of war!
And thou shakest back thy locks as if—a glow-worm for thy star—
I dubbed thee with a blade of grass, by earth-light, in a fairy ring,
Knight o' the garter o' Queen Mab, or lord in waiting to her king.
Brother, in thy plumèd pride of tented field and turretted tower,
Smiling brother, scornful brother, darest thou watch with me one hour?
Even now some fate is near, for I shake and know not why,
And a wider sight is orbing, orbing on my moistened eye,
And I feel a thousand flutterings round my soul's still vacant field,
Like the ravens and the vultures o'er a carnage yet unkilled.
Hist! I see the stir of glamour far upon the twilight wold,
Hist! I see the vision rising! List! and as I speak behold!
These dull mists are mists of morning, and behind yon eastern hill,
The hot sun abides my bidding: he shall melt them when I will.
All the night that now is passed, the foe hath labored for the day,
Creeping through the stealthy dark, like a tiger to his prey.
Throw this window wider! Strain thine eyes along the dusky vale!
Art thou cold with horror? Has thy bearded cheek grown pale?
'T is the total Russian host, flooding up the solemn plain,
Secret as a silent sea, mighty as a moving main!
O my country! is there none to rouse thee to the rolling sight?
O thou gallant sentinel who hast watched so oft, so well, must thou sleep this only night?
So hath the shepherd lain on a rock above a plain,
Nor beheld the flood that swelled from some embowelled mount of woe,
Waveless, foamless, sure and slow,
Silent o'er the vale below,
Till nigher still and nigher comes the seeth of fields on fire,
And the thrash of falling trees, and the steam of rivers dry,
And before the burning flood the wild things of the wood
Skulk and scream, and fight, and fall, and flee, and fly.

A gun! and then a gun! I' the far and early sun
Dost thou see by yonder tree a fleeting redness rise,
As if, one after one, ten poppies red had blown,
And shed in a blinking of the eyes?
They have started from their rest with a bayonet at each breast,
Those watchers of the west who shall never watch again!
'T is naught to die, but oh, God's pity on the woe
Of dying hearts that know they die in vain!
Beyond yon backward height that meets their dying sight,
A thousand tents are white, and a slumbering army lies.
"Brown Bess," the sergeant cries, as he loads her while he dies,
"Let this devil's deluge reach them, and the good old cause is lost."
He dies upon the word, but his signal-gun is heard,
Yon ambush green is stirred, yon laboring leaves are tossed,
And a sudden sabre waves, and like dead from opened graves,
A hundred men stand up to meet a host.
Dumb as death, with bated breath,
Calm upstand that fearless band,
And the dear old native land, like a dream of sudden sleep,
Passes by each manly eye that is fixed so stern and dry
On the tide of battle rolling up the steep.
They hold their silent ground, I can hear each fatal sound
Upon that summer mound which the morning sunshine warms,
The word so brief and shrill that rules them like a will,
The sough of moving limbs, and the clank and ring of arms.
"Fire!" and round that green knoll the sudden war-clouds roll,
And from the tyrant's ranks so fierce an answering blast
Of whirling death came back that the green trees turned to black,
And dropped their leaves in winter as it passed.
A moment on each side the surging smoke is wide,
Between the fields are green, and around the hills are loud,
But a shout breaks out, and, lo! they have rushed upon the foe,
As the living lightning leaps from cloud to cloud.
Fire and flash, smoke and crash,
The fogs of battle close o'er friends and foes, and they are gone!
Alas, thou bright-eyed boy! alas, thou mother's joy!
With thy long hair so fair, that didst so bravely lead them on!
I faint with pain and fear. Ah, Heaven! what do I hear?
A trumpet-note so near?
What are these that race like hunters in a chase?
Who are these that run a thousand men as one?

Digitized by Google

What are these that crash the trees far in the waving rear?
Fight on, thou young hero! there's help upon the way!
The light horse are coming, the great guns are coming,
The Highlanders are coming;—good God give us the day!
Hurrah for the brave and the leal! Hurrah for the strong and the true!
Hurrah for the helmets of steel! Hurrah for the bonnets o' blue!
A run and a cheer, the Highlanders are here! a gallop and a cheer, the light horse are here!
A rattle and a cheer, the great guns are here!
With a cheer they wheel round and face the foe!
As the troopers wheel about, their long swords are out,
With a trumpet and a shout, in they go!
Like a yawning ocean green, the huge host gulfs them in,
But high o'er the rolling of the flood,
Their sabres you may see like lights upon the sea
When the red sun is going down in blood.
Again, again, again! And the lights are on the wane!
Ah, Christ! I see them sink, light by light,
As the gleams go one by one when the great sun is down,
And the sea rocks in foam beneath the night.
Ay, the great sun is low, and the waves of battle flow
O'er his honored head; but, oh, we mourn not he is down,
For to-morrow he shall rise to fill his country's eyes,
As he sails up the skies of renown!
Ye may yell, but ye shall groan!
Ye shall buy them bone for bone!
Now, tyrant, hold thine own! blare the trumpet, peal the drum!
From yonder hillside dark, the storm is on you! Hark!
Swift as lightning, loud as thunder, down they come!
As on some Scottish shore, with mountains frowning o'er,
The sudden tempests roar from the glen,
And roll the tumbling sea in billows to the lee,
Came the charge of the gallant Highlandmen!
And as one beholds the sea though the wind he cannot see,
But by the waves that flee knows its might,
So I tracked the Highland blast by the sudden tide that passed
O'er the wild and rolling vast of the fight.
Yes, glory be to God! they have stemmed the foremost flood!
I lay me on the sod and breathe again!
In the precious moments won, the bugle-call has gone
To the tents where it never rang in vain,
And lo, the landscape wide is red from side to side,
And all the might of England loads the plain!
Like a hot and bloody dawn, across the horizon drawn,
While the host of darkness holds the misty vale,
As glowing and as grand our bannered legions stand,
And England's flag unfolds upon the gale!
At that great sign unfurled, as morn moves o'er the world
When God lifts his standard of light,
With a tumult and a voice, and a rushing mighty noise,
Our long line moves forward to the fight.
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far
The to-and-fro storm of the never-done hurrahing,
Through the bright weather banner and feather rising and falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—
Our host moved on to the war,
While England, England, England, England, England!
Was blown from line to line near and far,
And like the morning sea, our bayonets you might see,
Come beaming, gleaming, streaming,
Streaming, gleaming, beaming,
Beaming, gleaming, streaming, to the war!
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far
The to-and-fro storm of the never-done hurrahing,
Through the bright weather, banner and feather rising and falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—
Our long line moved forward to the war.

A PSALM OF THE HEART.

Scourge us as Thou wilt, O Lord God of Hosts;
Deal with us, Lord, according to our transgressions;
But give us victory!
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Lift Thy wrath up from the day of battle,
And set it on the weight of other days,
Draw Thy strength from us for many days,
So Thou be with us on the day of battle,
And give us victory.
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Let the strong arm be as the flag o' the river,
The withered flag that flappeth o'er the river,
When all the flood is dried out of the river!

Let the brave heart be as a drunkard's bosom,
When the thick fume is frozen in the bosom,
And the bare sin lies shivering in the bosom!

Digitized by Google

Let the bold eye be sick and crazed with midnight,
Strained and cracked with aching days of midnight,
Swarmed and foul with creeping shapes of midnight!—

So Thou return upon the day of battle,
So we be strong upon the day of battle,
Be drunk with Thee upon the day of battle,
So Thou shine o'er us in the day of battle,
Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory.
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Shame us not, O Lord, before the wicked!
In our hidden places let Thy wrath
Afflict us; in the secret of our sin
Convince us; be the bones within our flesh
Marrowed with fire, and all the strings of life
Strung to the twang of torture; let the stench
Of our own strength torment us; the desire
Of our own glorious image in the sea
Consume us; shake the darkness like a tree,
And fill the night with mischiefs—blights and dwales,
Weevils, and rots, and cankers! But, O Lord,
Humble us not upon the day of battle,
Hide not Thy face upon the day of battle,
Let it shine o'er us on the day of battle,
Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory!
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Though Thou shouldst glorify us above measure,
Yet will we not forget that Thou art God!
Honor our land, O Lord! honor our land!

Be Thou her armor in the day of battle,
Whereon the sword of man shall strike in vain!
For Thou canst find the place and leave no scar,
Sting of bee, nor fairy-spot nor mole,
Yet kill the germ within the core of life.

Oh, lead her in the glory of her beauty,
So that the nations wonder at her beauty!
For Thou canst take her beauty by the heart
And throw the spout of sorrow from the fountain,
The flood of sorrow through the veins of joy.

Let her soul look out of her eyes of glory,
Lighten, O Lord, from awful eyes of glory!
For Thou canst touch the soul upon its throne,
The fortressed soul upon its guarded throne,
Nor scorch the sweet air of the populous splendor
That comes and goes about a leprous king.
Therefore fear not to bless us, O Lord God!
And give us victory!
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Sight of home, if Thou wilt; kiss of love,
If Thou wilt; children at the knees of peace,
If Thou wilt; parents weeping in the door
Of welcome, if Thou wilt; but victory,
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Pangs if Thou wilt, O Lord! Death if Thou wilt!
Labor and famine, frost and fire and storm,
Silent plague, and hurricane of battle,
The field-grave, and the wolf-grave, and the sea!
But victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Consider, Lord, the oppressions of the oppressor,
And give us victory!
The tyrant sitteth on his golden throne
In palaces of silver, to his gates
The meeting winds blow good from all the world.
Who hath undone the mountain where he locks
His treasure? In the armory of hell
Which engine is not his? His name infects
The air of every zone, and to each tongue
From Hecla to the Ganges adds a word
That kills all terms of pride. His servants sit
In empires round his empire; and outspread
As land beneath the water, O my God,
His kingdoms bear the half of all Thy stars!
Who hath out-told his princes? Who hath summed
His captains? From the number of his hosts
He should forget a nation and not lack!
Therefore, O Lord God, give us victory!

The serf is in his hut; the unsacred sire
Who can beget no honor. Lo his mate
Dim through the reeking garlic—she whose womb
Doth shape his ignorant shame, and whose young slave
In some far field thickens a knouted hide
For baser generations. Their dull eyes
Are choked with feudal welfare; their rank limbs
Steam in the stye of plenty; their rude tongues,
That fill the belly from the common trough,
Discharge in gobbets of as gross a speech
That other maw the heart. Nor doth the boor
Refuse his owner's chattel though she breed
The rich man's increase, nor doth she disdain
The joyless usage of such limbs as toil
Yoked with the nobler ox, and take as mute
A beast's infliction; at her stolid side
The girl that shall be such a thing as she,
Suckles the babe she would not, with the milk
A bondmaid owes her master. Lord, Thou seest!
Therefore, O Lord God, give us victory!

The captive straineth at the dungeon-grate.
Behold, O Lord, the secret of the rock,
The dungeon and the captive, and the chain!
Though it be hidden under forest-leaves,
Though it be on the mountains among clouds,
Though they point to it as a crag o' the hill,
And say concerning it that the wind waileth,
Thou knowest the inner secret and the sin!
I see his white face at the dungeon-bars,
As snow between the bars of winter trees.
He sinketh down upon the dungeon-stones,
His white face making light within the dungeon,

Digitized by Google

The claspèd whiteness of his praying hands
Flickering a little light within the dungeon.
And through the darkness, through the cavern darkness,
Like to a runnel in a savage wood,
Sweet through the horror of the hollow dark
He sings the song of home in the strange land.
How long, O Lord of thunder? Victory!
Lord God of vengeance, give us victory!
Victory, victory! O Lord, victory!
O Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,
Like a whale to starboard, a whale to port;
Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,
And the steamer steams through the sea, love!

I see the ship on the sea, love,
I stand alone
On this rock,
The sea does not shock
The stone;
The waters around it are swirled,
But under my feet
I feel it go down
To where the hemispheres meet
At the adamant heart of the world.
Oh, that the rock would move!
Oh, that the rock would roll
To meet thee over the sea, love!
Surely my mighty love
Should fill it like a soul,
And it should bear me to thee, love;
Like a ship on the sea, love,
Bear me, bear me, to thee, love!

Guns are thundering, seas are sundering, crowds are wondering,
Low on our lee, love.
Over and over the cannon-clouds cover brother and lover, but over and over
The whirl-wheels trundle the sea, love,
And on through the loud pealing pomp of her cloud
The great ship is going to thee, love;
Blind to her mark, like a world through the dark,
Thundering, sundering, to the crowds wondering,
Thundering ever to thee, love.

I have come down to thee coming to me, love.
I stand, I stand
On the solid sand,
I see thee coming to me, love;
The sea runs up to me on the sand,
I start—'t is as if thou hadst stretched thine hand
And touched me through the sea, love.
I feel as if I must die,
For there 's something longs to fly,
Fly and fly, to thee, love.
As the blood of the flower ere she blows
Is beating up to the sun,
And her roots do hold her down,
And it blushes and breaks undone
In a rose,
So my blood is beating in me, love!

I see thee nigh and nigher,
And my soul leaps up like sudden fire,
My life 's in the air
To meet thee there,
To meet thee coming to me, love!
Over the sea,
Coming to me,
Coming, and coming to me, love!

The boats are lowered: I leap in first,
Pull, boys, pull! or my heart will burst!
More! more!—lend me an oar!—
I 'm through the breakers! I 'm on the shore!
I see thee waiting for me, love!

A sudden storm
Of sighs and tears,
A clenching arm,
A look of years.
In my bosom a thousand cries,
A flash like light before my eyes,
And I am lost in thee, love!

"SHE TOUCHES A SAD STRING OF SOFT RECALL."

Return, return! all night my lamp is burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn;
Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning
Bears witness that the absent can return,
Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,
Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,
Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness
To feed the sorrowy signal for return,
Return, return.

Like it, like it, whene'er the east wind sings,
I bend and shake; like it, I quake and yearn,
When Hope's late butterflies, with whispering wings,
Fly in out of the dark, to fall and burn—
Burn in the watchfire of return,
Return, return.

Like it, the very flame whereby I pine
Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn
My soul becomes a better soul than mine,
And from its brightening beacon I discern
My starry love go forth from me, and shine
Across the seas a path for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return! all night I see it burn,
All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin
Of palmèd praying hands that meet and yearn—
Yearn to the impleaded skies for thy return.
Day, like a golden fetter, locks them in,
And wans the light that withers, though it burn
As warmly still for thy return;
Still through the splendid load uplifts the thin
Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn
Naught but that votive sign for thy return—
That single suppliant sign for thy return,
Return, return.

Digitized by Google

Return, return! lest haply, love, or e'er
Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,
And thou, who through the window didst discern
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair
To find no wide eyes watching there,
No withered welcome waiting thy return!
A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,
The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,
Warm with the famished fire that lived to burn—
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,
Return, return.

AMERICA.

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
Who north or south, on east or western land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
For God; O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
Far yet unsevered—children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an empire wide as Shakespeare's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

GOOD-NIGHT IN WAR-TIME.

TO ALEXANDER SMITH.

The stars we saw arise are high above,
And yet our Even-song seems sung too soon.
Good-night! I lay my hand—with such a love
As thou wert brother of my blood—upon
Thy shoulder, and methinks beneath the moon
Those sisters, Anglia and Caledon,
Lean toward each other. Ay, for Man is one;
We are a host ruled by one trumpet-call,
Where each, armed in his sort, makes as he may
The general motion. The well-tuned array
We see; yet to what victory in what wars
We see not; but like the revolving stars
Move on ourselves. The total march of all
Or men or stars God knows. Lord, lead us on!

ISABEL.

In the most early morn
I rise from a damp pillow, tempest-tost,
To seek the sun with silent gaze forlorn,
And mourn for thee, my lost
Isabel.

That early hour I meet
The daily vigil of my life to keep,
Because there are no other lights so sweet,
Or shades so long and deep,
Isabel.

And best I think of thee
Beside the duskest shade and brightest sun,
Whose mystic lot in life it was to be
Outshone, outwept by none,
Isabel.

Men said that thou wert fair:
There is no brightness in the heaven above,
There is no balm upon the summer air
Like thy warm love,
Isabel.

Men saw that thou wert bright;
There is no wildness in the winds that blow,
There is no darkness in the winter's night
Like thy dark woe,
Isabel.

And yet thy path did miss
Men's footsteps: in their haunts thou hadst no joy;
The thoughts of other worlds were thine in this;
In thy sweet piety, and in thy bliss
And grief, for life too coy,
Isabel.

And so my heart's despair
Looks for thee ere the firstling smoke hath curled;
While the wrapped earth is at her morning prayer,
Ere yet she putteth on her workday air
And robes her for the world,
Isabel.

When the sun-burst is o'er
My lonely way about the world I take,
Doing and saying much, and feeling more,
And all things for thy sake,
Isabel.

But never once I dare
To see thine image till the day be new,
And lip hath sullied not the unbreathed air,
And waking eyes are few,
Isabel.

Then that lost form appears
Which was a joy to few on earth but me:
In the young light I see thy guileless glee,
In the deep dews thy tears,
Isabel.

So with Promethean moan
In widowhood renewed I learn to grieve;
Blest with one only thought—that I alone
Can fade; that thou through years shall still shine on
In beauty, as in beauty art thou gone,
Thou morn that knew no eve,
Isabel.

In beauty art thou gone;
As some bright meteor gleams across the night,
Gazed on by all, but understood by none,
And dying by its own excess of light,
Isabel.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A Nun Transhendent

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FREDERICK LOCKER.

FREDERICK LOCKER was born at Greenwich Hospital (of which his father, Edward Hawe Locker, was a civil commissioner) in 1824. His early writings received little encouragement, and his manuscripts were flung about by magazine editors with that blindness to the merits of a new writer which is so common that it may almost be taken as the best proof of real merit. In a letter to a friend, after mentioning these repeated rejections of his verses, he says: "Thackeray believed in me, and used to say, 'Never mind, Locker; our verse *may* be small beer, but at any rate it is the right tap.' This encouraged me, and I wrote on; and when 'Macmillan' refused 'My Neighbor Rose,' I sent it to the 'Cornhill;' and when 'Fraser' declined 'A Nice Correspondent,' I sent it to 'St. Paul's.' I could get no one to accept 'My Grandmother.'"

In 1857 Locker published a collection of his poems, under the title "London Lyrics," which has been increased in subsequent issues, and has passed through seven editions in England and been republished in Boston, Mass. In 1867 he edited "Lyra Elegantiarum," a collection of *vers de société*, in which species of composition he is himself second to none save possibly Praed.

A NICE CORRESPONDENT!

THE glow and the glory are plighted
To darkness, for evening is come;
The lamp in Glebe Cottage is lighted,
The birds and the sheep-bells are dumb.
I'm alone at my casement, for *Pappy*
Is summoned to dinner to Kew:
I'm alone, my dear Fred, but I'm happy—
I'm thinking of you.

I wish you were here. Were I duller
Than dull, you'd be dearer than dear;
I am drest in your favorite color—
Dear Fred, how I wish you were here!
I am wearing my lazuli necklace,
The necklace you fastened askew!
Was there ever so rude or so reckless
A darling as you?

I want you to come and pass sentence
On two or three books with a plot;
Of course you know "Janet's Repentance?"
I'm reading Sir Waverley Scott,
The story of Edgar and Lucy,
How thrilling, romantic, and true!
The Master (his bride was a goosey!)
Reminds me of you.

To-day, in my ride, I've been crowning
The beacon; its magic still lures,
For up there you discoursed about Browning,
That stupid old Browning of yours.
His vogue and his verse are alarming,
I'm anxious to give him his due;
But, Fred, he's not nearly so charming
A poet as you.

I heard how you shot at The Beeches,
I saw how you rode Chanticleer,
I have read the report of your speeches,
And echoed the echoing cheer.
There's a whisper of hearts you are breaking,
I envy their owners, I do!
Small marvel that Fortune is making
Her idol of you.

Alas for the world, and its dearly
Bought triumph and fugitive bliss!
Sometimes I half wish I were merely
A plain or a penniless miss;
But, perhaps one is blest with a measure
Of pelf, and I'm not sorry, too,
That I'm pretty, because it's a pleasure,
My dearest, to you.

Your whim is frolic and fashion,
Your taste is for letters and art,
This rhyme is the commonplace passion
That glows in a fond woman's heart.
Lay it by in a dainty deposit
For relics, we all have a few!
Love, some day they'll print it, because it
Was written to you.

A HUMAN SKULL.

A HUMAN Skull! I bought it passing cheap—
Indeed 't was dearer to its first employer;
I thought mortality did well to keep
Some mute memento of the Old Destroyer.

Time was, some may have prized its blooming skin;
Here lips were wooed, perhaps, in transport tender;

Digitized by Google

Some may have chucked what was a dimpled chin,
And never had my doubt about its gender!

Did she live yesterday or ages back?
What color were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair, or brown, or black,
Poor little head! that long has done with aching?

It may have held to (shoot some random shots)
Thy brains, Eliza Fry!—or Baron Byron's;
The wits of Nelly Gwynn, or Doctor Watts—
Two quoted bards! two philanthropic sirens!

But this I trust is clearly understood,
If man or woman—if adored or hated—
Whoever owned the Skull was not so good,
Nor quite so bad as many may have stated.

Who love, can need no special type of Death;
He bares his awful face too soon, too often;
"Immortelles" bloom in Beauty's bridal wreath,
And does not yon green elm contain a coffin?

O true-love mine, what lines of care are these?
The heart still lingers with its golden hours,
But fading tints are on the chestnut-trees,
And where is all that lavish wealth of flowers?

The end is near. Life lacks what once it gave,
Yet death has promises that call for praises;
A very worthless rogue may dig the grave,
But hands unseen will dress the turf with daisies.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER.

(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE BY MR. ROMNEY.)

THIS relative of mine
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen,
How she looked at seventeen,
As a bride.

Beneath a summer tree
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste,
What an arm! and what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace, farthingale, and gay
Falbala,
—Were Romney's limning true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem
To say, "Come."

What funny fancy slips
From between these cherry lips?
Whisper me,
Sweet deity in paint,
What canon says I may n't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!
When I first
Saw this lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once shamed the swarthy crow:
By-and-by,
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine:
Well I wot,
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit—
Would she not?

Ah, perishable clay!
Her charms had dropped away
One by one:
But if she heaved a sigh
With a burden, it was "Thy
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overpressed—
In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

I fain would meet you there;
If witching as you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
That the better you must please
Grandpapa.

MY NEIGHBOR ROSE.

THOUGH slender walls our hearths divide,
No word has passed from either side,
How gaily all your days must glide
Unvexed by labor!
I 've seen you weep, and could have wept,
I've heard you sing, and may have slept;
Sometimes I hear your chimney swept,
My charming neighbor!

Your pets are mine. Pray what may ail
The pup, once eloquent of tail?
I wonder why your nightingale
Is mute at sunset?
Your puss, demure and pensive, seems
Too fat to mouse. She much esteems
Yon sunny wall, and sleeps and dreams
Of mice she once ate.

Digitized by Google

Our tastes agree. I dote upon
Frail jars, turquoise and celadon,
The "Wedding March" of Mendelssohn,
And *Penseroso.*
When sorely tempted to purloin
Your *pietà* of Marc Antoine,
Fair Virtue doth fair play enjoin,
Fair Virtuoso!

At times an Ariel, cruel-kind,
Will kiss my lips, and stir your blind,
And whisper low, "She hides behind;
Thou art not lonely."
The tricksy sprite did erst assist
At hushed Verona's moonlight tryst;
Sweet Capulet! thou wert not kissed
By light winds only.

I miss the simple days of yore,
When two long braids of hair you wore,
And *chat botté* was wondered o'er,
In corner cosy.
But gaze not back for tales like those:
It 's all in order, I suppose,
The Bud is now a blooming Rose—
A rosy posy!

Indeed, farewell to bygone years;
How wonderful the change appears,
For curates now and cavaliers
In turn perplex you:
The last are birds of feather gay,
Who swear the first are birds of prey;
I 'd scare them all had I my way,
But that might vex you.

At times I 've envied, it is true,
That hero blithe, of twenty-two,
Who sent *bouquets* and *billets-doux*,
And wore a sabre.
The rogue! how close his arm he wound
About her waist who never frowned.
He loves you, child. Now, is he bound
To love *my* neighbor?

The bells are ringing. As is meet,
White favors fascinate the street,
Sweet faces greet me, rueful-sweet
'Twixt tears and laughter:
They crowd the door to see her go.
The bliss of one brings many woe;
Oh, kiss the bride, and I will throw
The old shoe after.

What change in one short afternoon—
My Charming Neighbor gone—so soon!
Is yon pale orb her honey-moon
Slow rising hither?
O lady, wan and marvellous,
How often have we communed thus;
Sweet memory shall dwell with us,
And joy go with her!

THE OLD CRADLE.

And this was your Cradle? Why surely, my Jenny,
Such slender dimensions go clearly to show
You were an exceedingly small picaninny
Some nineteen or twenty short summers ago.

Your baby-days flowed in a much-troubled channel;
I see you as then in your impotent strife,
A tight little bundle of wailing and flannel,
Perplexed with that newly-found fardel called Life.

To hint at an infantine frailty 's a scandal;
Let bygones be bygones, and somebody knows
It was bliss such a Baby to dance and to dandle,
Your cheeks were so velvet, so rosy your toes.

Ay, here is your Cradle; and Hope, at times lonely,
With Love now is watching beside it, I know.
They guard the small nest you inherited only
Some nineteen or twenty short summers ago.

It is Hope gilds the future, Love welcomes it smiling;
Thus wags the old world, therefore stay not to ask,
"My future bids fair, is my future beguiling?"
If masked, still it pleases—then raise not the mask.

Is Life a poor coil some would gladly be doffing?
He is riding post-haste who their wrongs will adjust;
For at most 't is a footstep from cradle to coffin:
From a spoonful of pap to a mouthful of dust.

Then smile as your future is smiling, my Jenny!
I see you, except for those infantine woes,
Little changed since you were but a small picaninny
—Your ceeeks were so velvet, so rosy your toes!

Ay, here is your Cradle! much, much to my liking,
Though nineteen or twenty long winters have sped;
But hark! as I 'm talking there 's six o'clock striking—
It is time Jenny's baby should be in its bed.

THE RUSSET PITCHER.

"The pot goeth so long to the water till at length it cometh broken home."

Away, ye simple ones, away!
Bring no vain fancies hither;
The brightest dreams of youth decay,
The fairest roses wither.

Ay, since this fountain first upwelled,
And Dryad learned to drink,
Knit hand in hand, have lovers held
Sweet parley at its brink.

From youth to age this waterfall
Most tunefully flows on,
But where, ay, tell me where are all
The constant lovers gone!

Digitized by Google

The falcon on the turtle preys,
And beardless vows are brittle;
The brightest dream of youth decays,
Ah, love is good for little.

"Fair maiden, set thy pitcher down,
And heed a truth neglected:
The more this sorry world is known,
The less it is respected.

"Though youth is ardent, gay, and bold,
It flatters and beguiles;
Though Giles is young—and I am old,
Ne'er trust thy heart to Giles.

"Thy pitcher may some luckless day
Be broken coming hither;
Thy doting slave may prove a knave—
The fairest roses wither."

She laughed outright, she scorned him quite,
She deftly filled her pitcher;
For that dear sight an anchorite
Would deem himself the richer.

Ill-fated damsel! go thy way,
Thy lover's vows are lither;
The brightest dreams of youth decay,
The fairest roses wither.

* * * * *

These days were soon the days of yore;
Six summers pass, and then
That musing man would see once more
The fountain in the glen;

Again would stray where once he strayed,
Through copse and quiet dell,
Half hoping too to meet the maid
Pass tripping from the well.

No light step comes, but, evil-starred,
He finds a mournful token,
There lies a russet pitcher marred,
The damsel's pitcher broken!

Profoundly moved that muser cried,
"The spoiler has been hither;
O would the maiden first had died—
The fairest roses wither!"

He turned from that unholy ground,
His world-worn bosom throbbing;
A bow-shot thence a child he found,
The little man was sobbing.

He gently stroked that curly head—
"My child what brings thee hither?
Weep not, my simple child," he said,
"Or let us weep together.

"Thy world I ween is gay and green,
A garden undefiled;
Thy thought should run on mirth and fun—
Where dwellest thou, my child?"

'T was then the rueful urchin spoke:
"My daddy 's Giles the ditcher,
I fetch the water—oh, I 've broke—
I 've broke my mammy's pitcher!"

CIRCUMSTANCE.

THE ORANGE.

It ripened by the river banks,
Where, mask and moonlight aiding,
Don Juans play their pretty pranks,
Dark Donnas serenading.

By Moorish damsel it was plucked,
Beneath the golden day there;
By swain 't was then in London sucked,
Who flung the peel away there.

He could not know in Pimlico,
As little she in Seville,
That *I* should reel upon that peel,
And wish them at the devil!

VANITY FAIR.

"Vanitas vanitatum" has rung in the ears
Of gentle and simple for thousands of years;
The wail still is heard, yet its notes never scare
Either simple or gentle from Vanity Fair.

I often hear people abusing it, yet
There the young go to learn and the old to forget;
The mirth may be feigning, the sheen may be glare,
But the gingerbread 's gilded in Vanity Fair.

Old Dives there rolls in his chariot, but mind
Atra Cura is up with the lacqueys behind;
Joan trudges with Jack—are the sweethearts aware
Of the trouble that waits them in Vanity Fair?

We saw them all go, and we something may learn
Of the harvest they reap when we see them return;
The tree was enticing, its branches are bare,
Heigho for the promise of Vanity Fair!

That stupid old Dives, once honest enough,
His honesty sold for star, ribbon, and stuff;
And Joan's pretty face has been clouded with care
Since Jack bought *her* ribbons at Vanity Fair.

Contemptible Dives! too credulous Joan!
Yet we all have a Vanity Fair of our own·
My son, you have yours, but you need not despair,
I own I've a weakness for Vanity Fair.

Philosophy halts, wisest counsels are vain,
We go, we repent, we return there again;
To-night you will certainly meet with us there—
So come and be merry in Vanity Fair.

Digitized by Google

OLD LETTERS.

Old letters! wipe away the tear
For vows and wishes vainly worded;
A pilgrim finds his journal here
Since first his youthful loins were girded.

Yes, here are wails from Clapham Grove;
How could philosophy expect us
To live with Doctor Wise, and love
Rice pudding and the Greek Delectus?

How strange to commune with the Dead!
Dead joys, dead loves—and wishes thwarted;
Here 's cruel proof of friendships fled;
And sad enough of friends departed.

Yes, here 's the offer that I wrote
In '33 to Lucy Diver;
And here John Wylie's begging note—
He never paid me back a stiver.

And here my feud with Major Spike,
Our bet about the French invasion;
I must confess I acted like
A donkey upon that occasion.

Here 's news from Paternoster Row;
How mad I was when first I learnt it!
They would not take my Book, and now
I 'd give a trifle to have burnt it.

A ghastly bill! "I disapprove:"
And yet She helped me to defray it:
What tokens of a mother's love!
O bitter thought! I can't repay it.

And here 's a score of notes at last,
With "love" and "dove," and "sever" "never"—
Though hope, though passion may be past,
Their perfume is as sweet as ever.

A human heart should beat for two,
Despite the taunt of single scorners;
And all the hearths I ever knew
Had got a pair of chimney-corners.

See here a double violet—
Two locks of hair—a deal of scandal;
I 'll burn what only leaves regret—
Go, Betty, bring a lighted candle.

MY FIRST-BORN.

"He sha'n't be their namesake, the rather
That both are such opulent men;
His name shall be that of his father,
My Benjamin, shortened to Ben.

"Yes, Ben, though it cost him a portion
In each of my relatives' wills—
I scorn such baptismal extortion!
(That creaking of boots must be Squills).

"It is clear, though his means may be narrow,
This infant his age will adorn;
I shall send him to Oxford from Harrow—
I wonder how soon he 'll be born!"

A spouse thus was airing his fancies
Below—'t was a labor of love—
And was calmly reflecting on Nancy's
More practical labor above;

Yet while it so pleased him to ponder,
Elated, at ease, and alone,
The pale, patient victim up yonder
Had budding delights of her own—

Sweet thoughts, in their essence diviner
Than paltry ambition and pelf;
A cherub, no babe will be finer,
Invented and nursed by herself.

One breakfasting, dining, and teaing,
With appetite naught can appease;
And quite a Young Reasoning Being
When called on to yawn and to sneeze.

What cares that heart, trusting and tender,
For fame or avuncular wills?
Except for the name and the gender,
She 's almost as tranquil as Squills.

That father, in reverie centred,
Dumfoundered, his thoughts in a whirl,
Heard Squills, as the creaking boots entered,
Announce that his Boy was—a Girl!

REPLY TO A LETTER ENCLOSING A LOCK OF HAIR.

"'My darling wants to see you soon'—
I bless the little maid and thank her;
To do her bidding night and noon
I draw on Hope—Love's kindest banker!"
Old MS.

Yes, you were false, and though I 'm free,
I still would be the slave of yore;
Then joined our years were thirty-three,
And now—yes, now, I 'm thirty-four.
And though you were not learnèd—well,
I was not anxious you should grow so—
I trembled once beneath her spell
Whose spelling was extremely so-so!

Bright season! why will memory
Still haunt the path our rambles took,
The sparrow's nest that made you cry,
The lilies captured in the brook?
I 'd lifted you from side to side,
You seemed as light as that poor sparrow;
I know who wished it twice as wide,
I think you thought it rather narrow.

Time was, indeed, a little while!
My pony could your heart compel;
And once beside the meadow-stile,
I thought you loved me just as well;
I 'd kissed your cheek; in sweet surprise
Your troubled gaze said plainly, "Should he?"

Digitized by Google

But doubt soon fled those daisy eyes—
"He could not wish to vex me, could he?"

The brightest eyes are often sad,
But your fair cheek, so lightly swayed,
Could ripple into dimples glad,
For O my stars, what mirth we made!
The brightest tears are soonest dried,
But your young love and dole were stable;
You wept when dear old Rover died,
You wept—and dressed your dolls in sable.

As year succeeds to year, the more
Imperfect life's fruition seems,
Our dreams, as baseless as of yore,
Are not the same enchanting dreams.
The girls I love now vote me slow—
How dull the boys who once seemed witty!
Perhaps I 'm getting old—I know
I 'm still romantic—more 's the pity!

Ah, vain regret! to few, perchance,
Unknown, and profitless to all;
The wisely-gay, as years advance,
Are gaily-wise. Whate'er befall,
We 'll laugh at folly, whether seen
Beneath a chimney or a steeple;
At yours, at mine—our own, I mean,
As well as that of other people.

They cannot be complete in aught
Who are not humorously prone—
A man without a merry thought
Can hardly have a funny-bone.
To say I hate your dismal men
Might be esteemed a strong assertion;
If I 've blue devils now and then,
I make them dance for my diversion.

And here 's your letter debonair!
"*My friend, my dear old friend of yore,*"
And is this curl your daughter's hair?
I 've seen the Titian tint before.
Are we the pair that used to pass
Long days beneath the chestnut shady?
You then were such a pretty lass!
I 'm told you 're now as fair a lady.

I 've laughed to hide the tear I shed,
As when the Jester's bosom swells,
And mournfully he shakes his head,
We hear the jingle of his bells.
A jesting vein your poet vexed,
And this poor rhyme, the Fates determine,
Without a parson or a text,
Has proved a rather prosy sermon.

THE BEAR-PIT.

AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

We liked the bear's serio-comical face,
As he lolled with a lazy, a lumbering grace;
Said Slyboots to me (just as if she had none),
"Papa, let 's give Bruin a bit of your bun."

Says I, "A plum bun might please wistful old Bruin,
He can't eat the stone that the cruel boy threw in;
Stick yours on the point of mamma's parasol,
And perhaps he will climb to the top of the pole.

"Some bears have got two legs, and some have got more,
Be good to old bears if they 've no legs or four;
Of duty to age you should never be careless,
My dear, I am bald, and I soon may be hairless!

"The gravest aversion exists among bears
For rude forward persons who give themselves airs,
We know how some graceless young people they mauled
Just for plaguing a prophet, and calling him bald.

"Strange ursine devotion! Their dancing-days ended,
Bears die to 'remove' what, in life, they defended:
They succored the Prophet, and since that affair
The bald have a painful regard for the bear."

My Moral—small people may read it, and run
(The child has my moral, the bear has my bun),
Does it argue that Bruin never had peace
'Twixt bald men in Bethel, and wise men in grease?

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

The characters of great and small
Come ready made (we can't bespeak one);
Their sides are many, too—and all
(Except ourselves) have got a weak one.
Some sanguine people love for life,
Some love their hobby till it flings them—
How many love a pretty wife
For love of the *éclat* she brings them!

In order to relieve my mind
I 've thrown off this disjointed chatter,
And much because I 'm disinclined
To venture on a painful matter:
I once was bashful; I 'll allow
I 've blushed for words untimely spoken,
I still am rather shy, and now . . .
And now the ice is fairly broken.

We all have secrets: you have one
Which may n't be quite your charming spouse's;
We all lock up a skeleton
In some grim chamber of our houses;
Familiars who exhaust their days
And nights in plaguing fops and fogies,
And who, excepting spiteful ways,
Are blameless, unassuming bogies.

We hug the phantom we detest,
We rarely let it cross our portals:
It is a most exacting guest,
Now are we not afflicted mortals?
Your neighbor Gay, that jovial wight,
As Dives rich, and bold as Hector,
Poor Gay steals twenty times a night,
On shaking knees, to see his spectre.

Digitized by Google

Old Dives fears a pauper fate,
  And hoarding is his gloomy passion;
And some poor souls anticipate
  A waistcoat straiter than the fashion.
She, childless, pines, that lonely wife,
  And hidden tears are bitter shedding;
And he may tremble all his life,
  And die—but not of that he 's dreading.

Ah me, the World! How fast it spins!
  The beldams dance, the caldron bubbles;
They shriek, and stir it for our sins,
  And we must drain it for our troubles.
We toil, we groan—the cry for love
  Mounts upward from the seething city,
And yet I know we have above
  A FATHER, infinite in pity.

When Beauty smiles, when Sorrow weeps,
  When sunbeams play, when shadows darken,
One inmate of our dwelling keeps
  A ghastly carnival—but hearken!
How dry the rattle of the bones!
  The sound was not to make you start meant.
Stand by! Your humble servant owns
  The Tenant of this Dark Apartment.

THE CROSSING-SWEEPER.

THE SUTTEE.

A CROSSING-SWEEPER, *black and tan,*
Told how he came from Hindostan,
And why he wore a hat and shunned
The Ryals of the Pugree Bund.

My wife was fair, she worshipped me,
Her father was a Caradee,
His deity was aquatile,
A rough and tough old Crocodile.

To gratify this monster's maw
He sacrificed his sons-in-law;
I married, though the neighbors said he
Had *lost* five sons-in-law already.

Her father, when he played his pranks,
Proposed "a *turn* on Jumna's banks;
He spoke so kind, she seemed so glum,
I felt convinced that mime had come.

I fled before this artful ruse
To cook my too confiding goose,
And now I sweep, in chill despair,
A crossing in St. James's Square;

Some old *Qui-hy*, some rural flat,
May drop a sixpence in my hat;
Yet still I mourn the mango-tree
Where Azla first grew fond of me.

These rogues who swear my skin is tawny,
Would pawn their own for brandy-pawnee;
What matter if their skins are snowy—
As Chloe fair? They're drunk as Chloe!
Your town is vile. In Thames's stream
The Crocodiles get up the steam!
Your Juggernauts their victims bump
From Camberwell to Aldgate pump!

A year ago, come Candlemas,
I wooed a plump Ferringhee lass;
United at her idol fane,
I furnished rooms in Idol Lane.

A moon had waned when virtuous Emma
Involved me in a new dilemma:
The Bramah faith, that Emma scorns,
Impaled me tight on both its horns:

She vowed to burn if she survived me;
Of this sweet fancy she deprived me,
She ran from all her obligations,
And went to stay with her relations.

My Azla weeps by Jumna's deeps,
  But Emma mocks my trials,
She pokes her jokes in Seven Oaks,
  At me in Seven Dials—
I'm *dashed* if these Ferringhee folks
  Ain't rather worse than Ryals.

A SONG THAT NEVER WAS SUNG.

"THE well-beloved are only dead
  To idle mirth and sorrow,
Regretful tears for what is fled,
  And yearnings for to-morrow."
Alas that love should know alloy;
How frail the cup that holds our joy!

"How sweet, how passing sweet to rove
  Through fields of asphodel;
Where all we've lost, and all who love,
  Rejoice!"—Ah, who can tell?
Yet sweet it were, knit hand in hand,
To lead thee through a better land.

Why wish the fleeting year to stay?
  When time for us is flown,
There is a garden—far away,
  An Eden all our own:
And there I'll whisper in thine ear—
Ah! what I may not tell thee here!

ON AN OLD MUFF.

TIME has a magic wand!
What is it meets my hand,
Moth-eaten, mouldy, and
  Covered with fluff?
Faded, and stiff, and scant;
Can it be? no, it can't—
Yes—I declare it's Aunt
  Prudence's Muff!

Years ago, twenty-three,
Old Uncle Barnaby
Gave it to Aunty P.,
  Laughing and teasing—

Digitized by Google

"Pru., of the breezy curls,
Whisper those solemn churls,
What holds a pretty girl's
Hand without squeezing?"

Uncle was then a lad,
Gay, but, I grieve to add,
Sinful; if smoking bad
Baccy's a vice:
Glossy was then this mink
Muff, lined with pretty pink
Satin, which maiden's think
"Awfully nice!"

I seem to see again
Aunt, in her hood and train,
Glide with a sweet disdain,
Gravely to Meeting:
Psalm-book, and kerchief new,
Peeped from the Muff of Pru.;
Young men, and pious too,
Giving her greeting.

Sweetly her Sabbath sped
Then from this Muff, it 's said,
Tracts she distributed:
Converts (till Monday!)
Lured by the grace they lacked,
Followed her. One, in fact,
Asked for—and got his tract
Twice of a Sunday!

Love has a potent spell;
Soon this bold Ne'er-do-well,
Aunt 's too susceptible
Heart undermining,
Slipped, so the scandal runs,
Notes in the pretty nun's
Muff, triple-cornered ones,
Pink as its lining.

Worse followed, soon the jade
Fled (to oblige her blade!),
While her friends thought that they 'd
Locked her up tightly:
After such shocking games
Aunt is of wedded dames
Gayest, and now her name 's
Mrs. Golightly.

In female conduct flaw
Sadder I never saw,
Faith still I 've in the law
Of compensation.
Once Uncle went astray,
Smoked, joked, and swore away,
Sworn by he 's now, by a
Large congregation.

Changed is the Child of Sin,
Now he 's (he once was thin)
Grave, with a double chin—
Blest be his fat form!
Changed is the garb he wore,
Preacher was never more
Prized than is Uncle for
Pulpit or platform.

If all 's as best befits
Mortals of slender wits,
Then beg the Muff and its
Fair Owner pardon;
All's for the best, indeed,
Such is *my* simple creed,
Still I must go and weed
Hard in my garden.

AN INVITATION TO ROME, AND THE REPLY.

THE INVITATION.

O COME to Rome, it is a pleasant place,
Your London sun is here seen smiling brightly:
The Briton too puts on a cheery face,
And Mrs. Bull is suave and even sprightly.
The Romans are a kind and cordial race,
The women charming if one takes them rightly;
I see them at their doors, as day is closing,
More proud than duchesses—and more imposing.

A *far niente* life promotes the graces;
They pass from dreamy bliss to wakeful glee,
And in their bearing, and their speech, one traces
A breadth of grace and depth of courtesy
That are not found in more inclement places;
Their clime and tongue seem much in harmony;
The Cockney met in Middlesex, or Surrey,
Is often cold—and always in a hurry.

Though *far niente* is their passion, they
Seem here most eloquent in things most slight;
No matter what it is they have to say,
The manner always sets the matter right:
And when they've plagued or pleased you all the day,
They sweetly wish you "a most happy night."
Then, if they fib, and if their stories tease you,
'T is always something that they've wished to please you!

Oh, come to Rome, nor be content to read
Alone of stately palace and of street
Whose fountains ever run with joyful speed,
And never-ceasing murmur. Here we meet
Great Memnon's monoliths, or, gay with weed,
Rich capitals, as corner-stone, or seat,
The sites of vanished temples, where now moulder
Old ruin, hiding ruin even older.

Ay, come, and see the statues, pictures, churches,
Although the last are commonplace, or florid.
Some say 't is here that superstition perches,
Myself I'm glad the marbles have been quarried.
The sombre streets are worthy your researches;
The ways are foul, the lava pavement 's horrid,
But pleasant sights, that squeamishness disparages,
Are missed by all who roll about in carriages.

Digitized by Google

Anent one fane I deprecate all sneering,
For during Christmas-time I went there daily,
Amused, or edified, or both, by hearing
The little preachers of the *Ara Cœli*.
Conceive a four-year-old *bambina* rearing
Her small form on a rostrum—tricked out gaily,
And lisping, what for doctrine may be frightful,
With action most dramatic and delightful.

Oh, come! We 'll charter such a pair of nags!
The country 's better seen when one is riding:
We 'll roam where yellow Tiber speeds or lags
At will. The aqueducts are yet bestriding
With giant march (now whole, now broken crags
With flowers plumed) the swelling and subsiding
Campagna, girt by purple hills, afar—
That melt in light beneath the evening star.

A drive to Palæstrina will be pleasant,
The wild fig grows where erst her rampart stood;
There oft, in goat-skin clad, a sun-burnt peasant
Like Pan comes frisking from his ilex-wood,
And seems to wake the past time in the present
Fair *contadina*—mark his mirthful mood,
No antique satyr he. The nimble fellow
Can join with jolity your *saltarello*.

Old sylvan peace and liberty! The breath
Of life to unsophisticated man.
Here Mirth may pipe, here Love may weave his wreath,
"*Per dar' al mio bene.*" When you can,
Come share their leafy solitudes. Pale Death
And Time are grudging of our little span:
As Time speeds lightly o'er the changing corn
Death grins from yonder cynical old thorn.

I dare not speak of Michael Angelo—
Such theme were all too splendid for my pen.
And if I breathe the name of Sanzio
(The brightest of Italian gentlemen),
Is it that love casts out my fear, and so
I claim with him a kindredship? Ah! when
We love, the name is on our hearts engraven,
As is thy name, my own dear Bard of Avon!

Nor is the Coliseum theme of mine,
'T was built for poet of a larger daring;
The world goes there with torches, I decline
Thus to affront the moonbeams with their flaring.
Some time in May our forces we 'll combine
(Just you and I), and try a midnight airing,
And then I 'll quote this rhyme to you—and then
You 'll muse upon the vanity of men.

Oh, come! I send a leaf of April fern,
It grew where Beauty lingers round decay:
The ashes buried in a sculptured urn
Are not more dead than Rome—so dead today!
That better time, for which the patriots yearn,
Enchants the gaze, again to fade away.
They wait and pine for what is long denied,
And thus I wait till thou art by my side.

Thou 'rt far away! Yet, while I write, I still
Seem gently, Sweet, to press thy hand in mine;
I cannot bring myself to drop the quill,
I cannot yet thy little hand resign!
The plain is fading into darkness chill,
The Sabine peaks are flushed with light divine,
I watch alone, my fond thought wings to thee;
Oh come to Rome—oh come, oh come to me!

THE REPLY.

Dear Exile, I was pleased to get
Your rhyme, I've laid it up in cotton;
You know that you are all to "Pet,"
She feared that she was quite forgotten!
Mamma, who scolds me when I mope,
Insists—mamma is wise as gentle—
That I am still in love. I hope
That you feel rather sentimental.

Perhaps you think your *Loveforlore*
Should pine unless her slave be with her;
Of course you 're fond of Rome, and, more—
Perhaps you 'd like to coax me thither!
Chè! quit this dear delightful maze
Of calls and balls, to be intensely
Discomfited in fifty ways—
I like your confidence immensely!

Some girls who love to ride and race,
And live for dancing like the Bruens,
Confess that Rome 's a charming place,
In spite of all the stupid ruins;
I think it might be sweet to pitch
One's tent beside the banks of Tiber,
And all that sort of thing, of which
Dear Hawthorne's "quite" the best describer.

To see stone pines, and marble gods,
In garden alleys, red with roses,
The Perch where Pio Nono nods;
The Church where Raphael reposes;
Make pleasant *giros*—when we may;
Jump *stagionate*—where they 're easy;
And play croquet—the Bruens say
There 's turf behind the Ludovisi.

I 'll bring my books, though Mrs. Mee
Says packing books is such a worry;
I 'll bring my "Golden Treasury,"
Manzoni, and, of course, a "Murray;"
A Tupper, whom good people prize;
A Dante—Auntie owns a quarto—
I 'll try and buy a smaller size,
And read him on the *muro torto*.

But can I go? *La madre* thinks
It would be such an undertaking:
I wish we could consult a sphinx;
The thought alone has left her quaking.
Papa (we do not mind Papa)
Has got some "notice" of some "motion,"
And could not stay; but, why not—ah,
I've not the very slightest notion.

The Browns have come to stay a week,
They 've brought the boys, I have n't thanked 'em,

Digitized by Google

For Baby *Grand*, and Baby *Pic*,
  Are playing cricket in my sanctum:
Your Rover, too, affects my den,
  And when I pat the dear old whelp, it . . .
It makes me think of you, and then . . .
  And then I cry—I cannot help it.

Ah, yes—before you left me, ere
  Our separation was impending,
These eyes had seldom shed a tear,—
  I thought my joy could have no ending!
But cloudlets gathered soon, and this,
  This was the first that rose to grieve me—
To know that I possessed such bliss—
  For then I knew such bliss might leave me.

My thoughts are sadder than my rhymes!
  But yours have made my spirit better:
And though perhaps I grieve at times,
  I 'd meant to write a cheery letter;
But skies were dull, Rome sounded hot,
  I fancied I could live without it:
I thought I 'd go, I thought I 'd not,
  And then I thought I 'd think about it.

The sun now glances o'er the Park;
  If tears are on my cheek, they glitter;
I think I 've kissed your rhyme, for, hark!
  My "bulley" gives a saucy twitter!
Your blessed words extinguish doubt,
  A sudden breeze is gaily blowing,
And, hark! The minster-bells ring out—
  "She ought to go. Of course she 's going!"

THE JESTER'S PLEA.

These verses were published in 1862, in a volume of poems (by several hands) entitled "An Offering to Lancashire."

The World 's a sorry wench, akin
  To all that 's frail and frightful:
The World 's as ugly—ay, as Sin,
  And nearly as delightful!
The World 's a merry world (*pro tem.*),
  And some are gay, and therefore
It pleases them, but some condemn
  The World they do not care for.

The World 's an ugly world. Offend
  Good people, how they wrangle!
The manners that they never mend,
  The characters they mangle!
They eat, and drink, and scheme, and plod,
  And go to church on Sunday;
And many are afraid of God—
  And more of *Mrs. Grundy*.

The time for Pen and Sword was when
  "My ladye fayre," for pity,
Could tend her wounded knight, and then
  Be tender at his ditty.
Some ladies now make pretty songs,
  And some make pretty nurses:
Some men are great at righting wrongs,
  And some at writing verses.

I wish we better understood
  The tax that poets levy!
I know the Muse is *goody good*,
  I think she 's rather heavy:
She now compounds for winning ways
  By morals of the sternest,
Methinks the lays of nowadays
  Are painfully in earnest.

When Wisdom halts, I humbly try
  To make the most of Folly:
If Pallas be unwilling, I
  Prefer to flirt with Polly;
To quit the goddess for the maid
  Seems low in lofty musers;
But Pallas is a lofty jade—
  And beggars can't be choosers.

I do not wish to see the slaves
  Of party, stirring passion,
Or psalms quite superseding staves,
  Or piety "the fashion."
I bless the hearts where pity glows,
  Who, here together banded,
Are holding out a hand to those
  That wait so empty-handed!

A righteous work! My masters, may
  A Jester by confession
Scarce noticed join, half sad, half gay,
  The close of your procession?
The motley here seems out of place
  With graver robes to mingle,
But if one tear bedews his face,
  Forgive the bells their jingle.

MRS. SMITH.

Last year I trod these fields with Di,
And that's the simple reason why
  They now seem arid:
Then Di was fair and single; how
Unfair it seems on me, for now
  Di 's fair—and married!

In bliss we roved: I scorned the song
Which says that though young Love is strong,
  The Fates are stronger:
Breezes then blew a boon to men,
Then buttercups were bright, and then
  This grass was longer.

That day I saw and much esteemed
Di's ankles, which the clover seemed
  Inclined to smother:
It twitched, and soon untied (for fun)
The ribbon of her shoes, first one
  And then the other.

I 'm told that virgins augur some
Misfortune if their shoe-strings come
  To grief on Friday:
And so did Di, and then her pride
Decreed that shoe-strings so untied
  Are "so untidy!"

Of course I knelt, with fingers deft
I tied the right, and tied the left:

Digitized by Google

Says Di, "The stubble
Is very stupid—as I live
I 'm shocked—I 'm quite ashamed to give
You so much trouble."

For answer I was fain to sink
To what we all would say and think
Were Beauty present:
"Don't mention such a simple act—
A trouble? not the least. In fact,
It 's rather pleasant."

I trust that Love will never tease
Poor little Di, or prove that he 's
A graceless rover.
She 's happy now as *Mrs. Smith*—
And less polite when walking with
Her chosen lover!

Heigh-ho! Although no moral clings
To Di's blue eyes, and sandal-strings,
We 've had our quarrels!—
I think that Smith is thought an ass,
I know that when they walk in grass
She wears *balmorals*.

MR. PLACID'S FLIRTATION.

"Jemima was cross, and I lost my umbrella,
That day at the tomb of Cecilia Metella."
Letters from Rome.

MISS TRISTRAM'S *poulet* ended thus: "Nota bene,
We meet for croquet in the Aldobrandini."
Said my wife, "Then I 'll drive, and you 'll ride with Selina"
(The fair spouse of Jones, of the Via Sistina).

We started: I 'll own that my family deem
That I 'm soft, but I 'm not quite so soft as I seem;
As we crossed the stones gently a nursemaid said, "La—
There goes Mrs. Jones with Miss Placid's papa!"

Our friends, one or two may be mentioned anon,
Had arranged *rendez-vous* at the gate of St. John:
That passed, off we spun over turf that 's not green there,
And soon were all met at the villa. You 've been there?
I will try and describe, or I won't, if you please,
The good cheer that was set for us under the trees:
You have read the *menu*, may you read it again;
Champagne, perigord, galantine, and—champagne.

Suffice it to say I got seated between
Mrs. Jones and old Brown—to the latter's chagrin.
Poor Brown, who believes in himself—and, another thing,
Whose talk is so bald, but whose cheeks are so—t 'other thing.

She sang, her sweet voice filled the gay garden alleys;
I jested, but Brown would not smile at my sallies;
Selina remarked that a swell met at Rome
Is not always a swell when you meet him at home.

The luncheon despatched, we adjourned to croquet,
A dainty, but difficult sport in its way.
Thus I counsel the sage, who to play at it stoops—
Belabor thy neighbor, and spoon through thy hoops.
Then we strolled, and discourse found its kindest of tones:
"Oh, how charming were solitude. and—Mrs. Jones."
"Indeed, Mr. Placid, I dote on the sheeny
And shadowy paths of the Aldobrandini."

A girl came with violet posies, and two
Gentle eyes, like her violets, laden with dew,
And a kind of an indolent, fine-lady air—
As if she by accident found herself there.

I bought one. Selina was pleased to accept it;
She gave me a rosebud to keep—and I 've kept it.
Thus the moments flew by, and I think in my heart,
When one vowed one must go—two were loath to depart.

The twilight is near, we no longer can stay;
The steeds are remounted, and wheels roll away,
The ladies *condemn* Mrs. Jones, as the phrase is,
But vie with each other in chanting my praises

"He has so much to say," cries the fair Mrs. Legge;
"How amusing he was about missing the peg!"
"What a beautiful smile!" says the plainest Miss Gunn.
All echo, "He 's charming! delightful! What fun!"

This sounds rather nice, and it 's perfectly clear it
Had sounded more nice had I happened to hear it;
The men were less civil, and gave me a rub,
So I happened to hear when I went to the Club.

Says Brown, "I shall drop Mr. Placid's society"
(Brown is a prig of improper propriety);
"Hang him," said Smith (who from cant 's not exempt),
"Why, he 'll bring immorality into contempt."

Says I (to myself), when I found me alone,
"My dear wife has my heart, is it always her own?"
And further, says I (to myself), "I 'll be shot
If I know if Selina adores me or not."

Says Jones, "I 've just come from the *scavi*, at Veii—
I 've bought some remarkably fine scarabæi!"

Digitized by Google

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

Adelaide Anne Procter, daughter of Bryan Waller Procter, was born in London, October 30, 1825. She acquired an extensive knowledge of modern languages at a very early age, travelled on the Continent, and resided for a time in Turin. In 1853 she sent several poems to Dickens's "Household Words," under the assumed name of Mary Berwick. They were accepted, and especially attracted the attention of Dickens, who had no idea of the author's identity. "This went on," he wrote, "until December, 1854, when the Christmas number, entitled 'The Seven Poor Travellers,' was sent to press. Happening to be going to dine that day with an old and dear friend, distinguished in literature as Barry Cornwall, I took with me an early proof of that number, and remarked, as I laid it on the drawing-room table, that it contained a very pretty poem written by a certain Miss Berwick. Next day brought me the disclosure that I had so spoken of the poem to the mother of its writer, in its writer's presence; that I had no such correspondent in existence as Miss Berwick; and that the name had been assumed by Barry Cornwall's eldest daughter, Miss Adelaide Anne Procter." She had concealed her real name lest her verses might be accepted for her father's sake, and not on their own merits. Her publications in book form were: "Legends and Lyrics," first series 1858, second series 1861; and "A Chaplet of Verses," published for the benefit of a night refuge, 1862. The complete collection of her poems, with a sketch by Dickens, has passed through many editions. Miss Procter embraced the Roman Catholic faith in 1851, and in that faith she died, at her father's home in London, February 2, 1864.

LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

A LEGEND OF PROVENCE.

The lights extinguished, by the heart I leaned,
Half weary with a listless discontent.
The flickering giant-shadows, gathering near,
Closed round me with a dim and silent fear.
All dull, all dark, save when the leaping flame,
Glancing, lit up a Picture's ancient frame.
Above the hearth it hung. Perhaps the night,
My foolish tremors, or the gleaming light,
Lent power to that Portrait dark and quaint—
A Portrait such as Rembrandt loved to paint—
The likeness of a Nun. I seem to trace
A world of sorrow in the patient face,
In the thin hands folded across her breast:—
Its own and the room's shadow hid the rest.
I gazed and dreamed, and the dull embers stirred,
Till an old legend that I once had heard
Came back to me; linked to the mystic gloom
Of that dark Picture in the ghostly room.

In the far south, where clustering vines are hung;
Where first the old chivalric lays were sung;
Where earliest smiled that gracious child of France,
Angel and knight and fairy, called Romance,
I stood one day. The warm blue June was spread
Upon the earth; blue summer overhead,
Without a cloud to fleck its radiant glare,
Without a breath to stir its sultry air.
All still, all silent, save the sobbing rush
Of rippling waves, that lapsed in silver hush
Upon the beach; where, glittering toward the strand,
The purple Mediterranean kissed the land.

All still, all peaceful; when a convent chime
Broke on the mid-day silence for a time,
Then, trembling into quiet, seemed to cease,
In deeper silence and more utter peace.
So as I turned to gaze, where gleaming white,
Half hid by shadowy trees from passers' sight,
The Convent lay, one who had dwelt for long
In that fair home of ancient tale and song,
Who knew the story of each cave and hill
And every haunting fancy lingering still
Within the land, spake thus to me, and told
The Convent's treasured Legend, quaint and old

Long years ago, a dense and flowering wood,
Still more concealed where the white convent stood,
Borne on its perfumed wings the title came;
"Our Lady of the Hawthorns" is its name.
Then did that bell, which still rings out to-day,
Bid all the country rise, or eat, or pray.
Before that convent shrine, the haughty knight
Passed the lone vigil of his perilous fight;
For humbler cottage strife or village brawl,
The Abbess listened, prayed, and settled all.

Digitized by Google

Young hearts that came, weighed down by love or wrong,
Left her kind presence comforted and strong.
Each passing pilgrim and each beggar's right
Was food, and rest, and shelter for the night.
But, more than this, the Nuns could well impart
The deepest mysteries of the healing art;
Their store of herbs and simples was renowned,
And held in wondering faith for miles around.
Thus strife, love, sorrow, good and evil fate,
Found help and blessing at the convent gate.

Of all the Nuns, no heart was half so light,
No eyelids veiling glances half so bright,
No step that glided with such noiseless feet,
No face that looked so tender or so sweet,
No voice that rose in choir so pure, so clear,
No heart to all the others half so dear,
So surely touched by others' pain or woe,
(Guessing the grief her young life could not know,)
No soul in childlike faith so undefiled,
As Sister Angela's, the "Convent Child."
For thus they loved to call her. She had known
No home, no love, no kindred, save their own.
An orphan to their tender nursing given,
Child, plaything, pupil, now the Bride of Heaven.
And she it was who trimmed the lamp's red light
That swung before the altar, day and night;
Her hands it was whose patient skill could trace
The finest broidery, weave the costliest lace;
But most of all, her first and dearest care,
The office she would never miss or share,
Was every day to weave fresh garlands sweet,
To place before the shrine at Mary's feet.
Nature is bounteous in that region fair,
For even winter has her blossoms there.
Thus Angela loved to count each feast the best,
By telling with what flowers the shrine was dressed.
In pomp supreme the countless Roses passed,
Battalion on battalion thronging fast,
Each with a different banner, flaming bright,
Damask, or striped, or crimson, pink, or white,
Until they bowed before a new-born queen,
And the pure virgin Lily rose serene.
Though Angela always thought the Mother blest
Must love the time of her own hawthorn best,
Each evening through the year, with equal care,
She placed her flowers; then kneeling down in prayer,
As their faint perfume rose before the shrine,
So rose her thoughts, as pure and as divine.
She knelt until the shades grew dim without,
Till one by one the altar-lights shone out,
Till one by one the Nuns, like shadows dim,
Gathered around to chant their vesper hymn;
Her voice then led the music's wingèd flight,
And "Ave, Maria Stella" filled the night.
But wherefore linger on those days of peace?
When storms draw near, then quiet hours must cease.
War, cruel war, defaced the land, and came
So near the convent with its breath of flame,
That, seeking shelter, frightened peasants fled,
Sobbing out tales of coming fear and dread.
Till after a fierce skirmish, down the road,
One night came straggling soldiers, with their load
Of wounded, dying comrades; and the band,
Half pleading, yet as if they could command,
Summoned the trembling Sisters, craved their care,
Then rode away, and left the wounded there.
But soon compassion bade all fear depart,
And bidding every Sister do her part,
Some prepare simples, healing salves, or bands,
The Abbess chose the more experienced hands,
To dress the wounds needing most skilful care;
Yet even the youngest Novice took her share.
To Angela, who had but ready will
And tender pity, yet no special skill,
Was given the charge of a young foreign knight-
Whose wounds were painful, but whose danger slight.
Day after day she watched beside his bed,
And first in hushed repose the hours fled:
His feverish moans alone the silence stirred,
Or her soft voice, uttering some pious word.
At last the fever left him; day by day
The hours, no longer silent, passed away.
What could she speak of? First, to still his plaints,
She told him legends of the martyred Saints;
Described the pangs, which, through God's plenteous grace,
Had gained their souls so high and bright a place.
This pious artifice soon found success—
Or so she fancied—for he murmured less.
So she described the glorious pomp sublime,
In which the chapel shone at Easter time,
The Banners, Vestments, gold, and colors bright,
Counted how many tapers gave their light;
Then in minute detail went on to say,
How the High Altar looked on Christmas-day;
The kings and shepherds, all in green and red,
And a bright star of jewels overhead.
Then told the sign by which they all had seen
How even Nature loved to greet her Queen,
For, when Our Lady's last procession went
Down the long garden, every head was bent,
And, rosary in hand, each Sister prayed;
As the long floating banners were displayed,
They struck the hawthorn-boughs, and showers and showers
Of buds and blossoms strewed her way with flowers.
The knight unwearied listened; till at last,
He too described the glories of his past;
Tourney, and joust, and pageant bright and fair,
And all the lovely ladies who were there.
But half incredulous she heard. Could this—
This be the world? this place of love and bliss!
Where then was hid the strange and hideous charm,
That never failed to bring the gazer harm?
She crossed herself, yet asked, and listened still,
And still the knight described with all his skill
The glorious world of joy, all joys above,
Transfigured in the golden mist of love.
Spread, spread your wings, ye angel guardians bright,
And shield these dazzling phantoms from her sight!
But no; days passed, matins and vespers rang,
And still the quiet Nuns toiled, prayed, and sang,

Digitized by Google

And never guessed the fatal, coiling net
Which every day grew near, and nearer yet,
Around their darling; for she went and came
About her duties, outwardly the same.
The same? ah, no! even when she knelt to pray,
Some charmèd dream kept all her heart away.
So days went on, until the convent gate
Opened one night. Who durst go forth so late?
Across the moonlit grass, with stealthy tread,
Two silent, shrouded figures passed and fled.
And all was silent, save the moaning seas,
That sobbed and pleaded, and a wailing breeze
That sighed among the perfumed hawthorn-trees.
What need to tell that dream so bright and brief,
Of joy uncheckered by a dread of grief?
What need to tell how all such dreams must fade,
Before the slow, foreboding, dreaded shade,
That floated nearer, until pomp and pride,
Pleasure and wealth, were summoned to her side,
To bid, at least, the noisy hours forget,
And clamor down the whispers of regret?
Still Angela strove to dream, and strove in vain;
Awakened once, she could not sleep again.
She saw, each day and hour, more worthless grown
The heart for which she cast away her own;
And her soul learned, through bitterest inward strife,
The slight, frail love for which she wrecked her life,
The phantom for which all her hope was given,
The cold bleak earth for which she bartered heaven!
But all in vain; would even the tenderest heart
Now stoop to take so poor an outcast's part?

Years fled, and she grew reckless more and more,
Until the humblest peasant closed his door,
And where she passed, fair dames, in scorn and pride,
Shuddered, and drew their rustling robes aside.
At last a yearning seemed to fill her soul,
A longing that was stronger than control:
Once more, just once again, to see the place
That knew her young and innocent; to retrace
The long and weary southern path; to gaze
Upon the haven of her childish days;
Once more beneath the convent roof to lie;
Once more to look upon her home—and die!
Weary and worn—her comrades, chill remorse
And black despair, yet a strange silent force
Within her heart, that drew her more and more—
Onward she crawled, and begged from door to door.
Weighed down with weary days, her failing strength
Grew less each hour, till one day's dawn at length,
As first its rays flooded the world with light,
Showed the broad waters, glittering blue and bright,
And where, amid the leafy hawthorn-wood,
Just as of old the quiet cloister stood.
Would any know her? Nay, no fear. Her face
Had lost all trace of youth, of joy, of grace,
Of the pure, happy soul they used to know—
The novice Angela—so long ago.

She rang the convent-bell. The well-known sound
Smote on her heart, and bowed her to the ground.
And she, who had not wept for long, dry years,
Felt the strange rush of unaccustomed tears;
Terror and anguish seemed to check her breath,
And stop her heart. O God! could this be death?
Crouching against the iron gate, she laid
Her weary head against the bars, and prayed:
But nearer footsteps drew, then seemed to wait;
And then she heard the opening of the grate,
And saw the withered face, on which awoke
Pity and sorrow, as the portress spoke,
And asked the stranger's bidding: "Take me in,"
She faltered, "Sister Monica, from sin,
And sorrow, and despair, that will not cease;
Oh, take me in, and let me die in peace!"
With soothing words the Sister bade her wait,
Until she brought the key to unbar the gate.
The beggar tried to thank her as she lay,
And heard the echoing footsteps die away.
But what soft voice was that which sounded near,
And stirred strange trouble in her heart to hear?
She raised her head; she saw—she seemed to know—
A face that came from long, long years ago:
Herself; yet not as when she fled away,
The young and blooming novice, fair and gay,
But a grave woman, gentle and serene:
The outcast knew it—*what she might have been.*
But, as she gazed and gazed, a radiance bright
Filled all the place with strange and sudden light;
The Nun was there no longer, but, instead,
A figure with a circle round its head,
A ring of glory; and a face, so meek,
So soft, so tender. . . . Angela strove to speak,
And stretched her hands out, crying, "Mary mild,
Mother of mercy, help me!—help your child!"
And Mary answered: "From thy bitter past,
Welcome, my child! Oh, welcome home at last!
I filled thy place. Thy flight is known to none,
For all thy daily duties I have done;
Gathered thy flowers, and prayed, and sung, and slept;
Didst thou not know, poor child, *thy place was kept?*
Kind hearts are here; yet would the tenderest one
Have limits to its mercy: God has none.
And man's forgiveness may be true and sweet,
But yet he stoops to give it. More complete
Is Love that lays forgiveness at thy feet,
And pleads with thee to raise it. Only Heaven
Means *crowned*, not *vanquished*, when it says, 'Forgiven!'"
Back hurried Sister Monica; but where
Was the poor beggar she left lying there?
Gone; and she searched in vain, and sought the place
For that wan woman, with the piteous face:
But only Angela at the gateway stood,
Laden with hawthorn-blossoms from the wood.
And never did a day pass by again,
But the old portress, with a sigh of pain,

Digitized by Google

Would sorrow for her loitering: with a prayer
That the poor beggar, in her wild despair,
Might not have come to any ill; and when
She ended, "God forgive her!" humbly then
Did Angela bow her head, and say, "Amen!"
How pitiful her heart was! all could trace
Something that dimmed the brightness of her face
After that day, which none had seen before;
Not trouble—but a shadow—nothing more.

Years passed away. Then, one dark day of dread
Saw all the Sisters kneeling round a bed,
Where Angela lay dying; every breath
Struggling beneath the heavy hand of death.
But suddenly a flush lit up her cheek,
She raised her wan right hand, and strove to speak.
In sorrowing love they listened; not a sound
Or sigh disturbed the utter silence round.
The very tapers' flames were scarcely stirred,
In such hushed awe the Sisters knelt and heard.
And through that silence Angela told her life;
Her sin, her flight; the sorrow and the strife,
And the return; and then clear, low, and calm,
"Praise God for me, my sisters;" and the psalm
Rang up to heaven, far and clear and wide,
Again, and yet again, then sank and died;
While her white face had such a smile of peace,
They saw she never heard the music cease;
And weeping Sisters laid her in her tomb,
Crowned with a wreath of perfumed hawthorn bloom.

And thus the Legend ended. It may be
Something is hidden in the mystery,
Besides the lesson of God's pardon shown,
Never enough believed, or asked, or known.
Have we not all, amid life's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a noble life
That once seemed possible? Did we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach? It was. And yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vague regret.
But still *our place is kept*, and it will wait,
Ready for us to fill it, soon or late:
No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been.
Since Good, though only thought, has life and breath,
God's life—can always be redeemed from death;
And evil, in its nature, is decay,
And any hour can blot it all away:
The hopes that lost in some far distance seem,
May be the truer life, and this the dream.

THE ANGEL'S STORY.

THROUGH the blue and frosty heavens
Christmas stars were shining bright:
Glistening lamps throughout the City
Almost matched their gleaming light;
While the winter snow was lying,
And the winter winds were sighing,
Long ago, one Christmas-night.

While, from every tower and steeple,
Pealing bells were sounding clear,
(Never with such tones of gladness,
Save when Christmas-time is near,)
Many a one that night was merry
Who had toiled through all the year.

That night saw old wrongs forgiven,
Friends, long parted, reconciled;
Voices all unused to laughter,
Mournful eyes that rarely smiled,
Trembling hearts that feared the morrow,
Erom their anxious thoughts beguiled.

Rich and poor felt love and blessing
From the gracious season fall;
Joy and plenty in the cottage,
Peace and feasting in the hall,
And the voices of the children
Ringing clear above it all!

Yet one house was dim and darkened;
Gloom, and sickness, and despair,
Dwelling in the gilded chambers,
Creeping up the marble stair,
Even stilled the voice of mourning—
For a child lay dying there.

Silken curtains fell around him,
Velvet carpets hushed the tread,
Many costly toys were lying,
All unheeded, by his bed;
And his tangled golden ringlets
Were on downy pillows spread.

The skill of that mighty City
To save one little life was vain—
One little thread from being broken,
One fatal word from being spoken;
Nay, his very mother's pain,
And the mighty love within her,
Could not give him health again.

So she knelt there still beside him,
She alone with strength to smile,
Promising that he should suffer
No more in a little while,
Murmuring tender song and story
Weary hours to beguile.

Suddenly an unseen Presence
Checked those constant moaning cries,
Stilled the little heart's quick fluttering,
Raised those blue and wondering eyes,
Fixed on some mysterious vision,
With a startled sweet surprise.

For a radiant angel hovered,
Smiling, o'er the little bed;
White his raiment, from his shoulders
Snowy dove-like pinions spread,
And a starlike light was shining
In a Glory round his head.

While, with tender love, the angel,
Leaning o'er the little nest,
In his arms the sick child folding,
Laid him gently on his breast,
Sobs and wailings told the mother
That her darling was at rest.

Digitized by Google

So the angel, slowly rising,
  Spread his wings, and through the air
Bore the child, and, while he held him
  To his heart with loving care,
Placed a branch of crimson roses
  Tenderly beside him there.

While the child, thus clinging, floated
  Toward the mansions of the Blest,
Gazing from his shining guardian
  To the flowers upon his breast,
Thus the angel spake, still smiling
  On the little heavenly guest:

"Know, dear little one, that Heaven
  Does no earthly thing disdain,
Man's poor joys find there an echo
  Just as surely as his pain;
Love, on earth so feebly striving,
  Lives divine in heaven again!

"Once in that great town below us,
  In a poor and narrow street,
Dwelt a little sickly orphan;
  Gentle aid, or pity sweet,
Never in life's rugged pathway
  Guided his poor tottering feet.

"All the striving anxious forethought
  That should only come with age
Weighed upon his baby spirit,
  Showed him soon life's sternest page;
Grim Want was his nurse, and Sorrow
  Was his only heritage.

"All too weak for childish pastimes,
  Drearily the hours sped;
On his hands so small and trembling
  Leaning his poor aching head,
Or, through dark and painful hours,
  Lying sleepless on his bed—

"Dreaming strange and longing fancies
  Of cool forests far away;
And of rosy, happy children,
  Laughing merrily at play,
Coming home through green lanes, bearing
  Trailing boughs of blooming May.

"Scarce a glimpse of azure heaven
  Gleamed above that narrow street,
And the sultry air of summer
  (That you call so warm and sweet)
Fevered the poor orphan, dwelling
  In the crowded alley's heat.

"One bright day, with feeble footsteps
  Slowly forth he tried to crawl,
Through the crowded city's pathways,
  Till he reached a garden-wall,
Where 'mid princely halls and mansions
  Stood the lordliest of all.

"There were trees with giant branches,
  Velvet glades where shadows hide;
There were sparkling fountains glancing,
  Flowers, which in luxuriant pride
Even wafted breaths of perfume
  To the child who stood outside.

"He against the gate of iron
  Pressed his wan and wistful face,
Gazing with an awe-struck pleasure
  At the glories of the place;
Never had his brightest day-dream
  Shone with half such wondrous grace.

"You were playing in that garden,
  Throwing blossoms in the air,
Laughing when the petals floated
  Downward on your golden hair;
And the fond eyes watching o'er you,
And the splendor spread before you,
  Told a House's Hope was there.

"When your servants, tired of seeing
  Such a face of want and woe,
Turning to the ragged orphan,
  Gave him coin, and bade him go,
Down his cheeks so thin and wasted
  Bitter tears began to flow.

"But that look of childish sorrow
  On your tender child-heart fell,
And you plucked the reddest roses
  From the tree you loved so well—
Passed them through the stern cold grating,
  Gently bidding him 'Farewell!'

"Dazzled by the fragrant treasure
  And the gentle voice he heard,
In the poor forlorn boy's spirit,
  Joy, the sleeping Seraph, stirred;
In his hand he took the flowers,
  In his heart the loving word.

"So he crept to his poor garret;
  Poor no more, but rich and bright,
For the holy dreams of childhood—
  Love, and Rest, and Hope, and Light—
Floated round the orphan's pillow
  Through the starry summer night.

"Day dawned, yet the visions lasted;
  All too weak to rise he lay;
Did he dream that none spake harshly—
  All were strangely kind that day?
Surely then his treasured roses
  Must have charmed all ills away.

"And he smiled, though they were fading;
  One by one their leaves were shed;
'Such bright things could never perish,
  They would bloom again,' he said;
When the next day's sun had risen
  Child and flowers both were dead.

"Know, dear little one! our Father
  Will no gentle deed disdain;
Love on the cold earth beginning
  Lives divine in heaven again,
While the angel hearts that beat there
  Still all tender thoughts retain."

So the angel ceased, and gently
  O'er his little burden leant;
While the child gazed from the shining,
  Loving eyes that o'er him bent,
To the blooming roses by him,
  Wondering what that mystery meant.

Digitized by Google

Thus the radiant angel answered,
And with tender meaning smiled:
"Ere your childlike, loving spirit,
Sin and the hard world defiled,
God has given me leave to seek you—
I was once that little child!"

* * * * *

In the churchyard of that city
Rose a tomb of marble rare,
Decked, as soon as Spring awakened,
With her buds and blossoms fair—
And a humble grave beside it—
No one knew who rested there.

JUDGE NOT.

Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

The look, the air, that frets thy sight,
May be a token, that below
The soul has closed in deadly fight
With some infernal fiery foe,
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,
And cast thee shuddering on thy face!

The fall thou darest to despise—
Maybe the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

And judge none lost; but wait and see,
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain
And love and glory that may raise
This soul to God in after-days!

ONE BY ONE.

One by one the sands are flowing,
One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going;
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go to each,
Let no future dreams elate thee,
Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one (bright gifts from Heaven)
Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
Ready too to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee,
Do not fear an armèd band;
One will fade as others greet thee;
Shadows passing through the land.

Do not look at life's long sorrow;
See how small each moment's pain,
God will help thee for to-morrow,
So each day begin again.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its task to do or bear;
Luminous the crown, and holy,
When each gem is set with care.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or for passing hours despond;
Nor, the daily toil forgetting,
Look too eagerly beyond.

Hours are golden links, God's token,
Reaching heaven; but one by one
Take them, lest the chain be broken
Ere the pilgrimage be done.

A WOMAN'S QUESTION.

Before I trust my Fate to thee,
Or place my hand in thine,
Before I let thy Future give
Color and form to mine,
Before I peril all for thee, question thy soul to-night for me.

I break all slighter bonds, nor feel
A shadow of regret:
Is there one link within the Past
That holds thy spirit yet?
Or is thy Faith as clear and free as that which I can pledge to thee?

Does there within thy dimmest dreams
A possible future shine,
Wherein thy life could henceforth breathe,
Untouched, unshared by mine?
If so, at any pain or cost, oh, tell me before all is lost.

Look deeper still. If thou canst feel
Within thy inmost soul,
That thou hast kept a portion back,
While I have staked the whole:
Let no false pity spare the blow, but in true mercy tell me so.

Is there within thy heart a need
That mine cannot fulfil?
One chord that any other hand
Could better wake or still?
Speak now—lest at some future day my whole life wither and decay.

Lives there within thy nature hid
The demon-spirit Change,
Shedding a passing glory still
On all things new and strange?
It may not be thy fault alone—but shield my heart against thy own.

Couldst thou withdraw thy hand one day
And answer to my claim,
That Fate, and that to-day's mistake—
Not thou—had been to blame?
Some soothe their conscience thus; but thou wilt surely warn and save me now.

Digitized by Google

Nay, answer *not*, I dare not hear,
The words would come too late;
Yet I would spare thee all remorse:
So, comfort thee, my Fate—
Whatever on my heart may fall—remember, I
would risk it all!

A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

I WILL not let you say a Woman's part
Must be to give exclusive love alone;
Dearest, although I love you so, my heart
Answers a thousand claims besides your own.

I love—what do I not love? earth and air
Find space within my heart, and myriad things
You would not deign to heed are cherished there,
And vibrate on its very inmost strings.

I love the Summer with her ebb and flow
Of light, and warmth, and music, that have nursed
Her tender buds to blossoms . . . . and you know
It was in summer that I saw you first.

I love the Winter dearly, too, ... but then
I owe it so much; on a winter's day,
Bleak, cold, and stormy, you returned again,
When you had been those weary months away.

I love the Stars like friends; so many nights
I gazed at them, when you were far from me,
Till I grew blind with tears . . . . those far-off lights
Could watch you, whom I longed in vain to see.

I love the Flowers; happy hours lie
Shut up within their petals close and fast:
You have forgotten, dear; but they and I
Keep every fragment of the golden Past.

I love, too, to be loved; all loving praise
Seems like a crown upon my Life—to make
It better worth the giving, and to raise
Still nearer to your own the heart you take.

I love all good and noble souls; I heard
One speak of you but lately, and for days,
Only to think of it, my soul was stirred
In tender memory of such generous praise.

I love all those who love you; all who owe
Comfort to you: and I can find regret
Even for those poorer hearts who once could know
And once could love you, and can now forget.

Well, is my heart so narrow—I, who spare
Love for all these? Do I not even hold
My favorite books in special tender care,
And prize them as a miser does his gold?
The Poets that you used to read to me
While summer twilights faded in the sky;
But most of all I think Aurora Leigh,
Because—because—do you remember why?

Will you be jealous? Did you guess before
I loved so many things? Still you the best:
Dearest, remember that I love you more,
Oh, more a thousand times, than all the rest!

A DEAD PAST.

SPARE her at least: look, you have taken from me
The Present, and I murmur not, nor moan;
The Future too, with all her glorious promise;
But do not leave me utterly alone.

Spare me the Past: for, see, she cannot harm you,
She lies so white and cold, wrapped in her shroud;
All, all my own! and, trust me, I will hide her
Within my soul, nor speak to her aloud.

I folded her soft hands upon her bosom,
And strewed my flowers upon her—*they* still live:
Sometimes I like to kiss her closed white eyelids,
And think of all the joy she used to give.

Cruel indeed it were to take her from me;
She sleeps, she will not wake—no fear—again:
And so I laid her, such a gentle burden,
Quietly on my heart to still its pain.

I do not think that any smiling Present,
Any vague Future, spite of all her charms,
Could ever rival her. You know you laid her,
Long years ago, then living, in my arms.

Leave her at least: while my tears fall upon her,
I dream she smiles, just as she did of yore;
As dear as ever to me—nay, it may be,
Even dearer still—since I have nothing more.

A DOUBTING HEART.

WHERE are the swallows fled?
Frozen and dead,
Perchance upon some bleak and stormy shore.
O doubting heart!
Far over purple seas,
They wait, in sunny ease,
The balmy southern breeze,
To bring them to their northern homes once more.

Why must the flowers die?
Prisoned they lie
In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.
O doubting heart!
They only sleep below
The soft white ermine snow,
While winter winds shall blow,
To breathe and smile upon you soon again.

Digitized by Google

The sun has hid its rays
These many days;
Will dreary hours never leave the earth?
O doubting heart!
The stormy clouds on high
Veil the same sunny sky,
That soon (for spring is nigh)
Shall wake the summer into golden mirth.

Fair hope is dead, and light
Is quenched in night.
What sound can break the silence of despair?
O doubting heart!
Thy sky is overcast,
Yet stars shall rise at last,
Brighter for darkness past,
And angels' silver voices stir the air.

A STUDENT.

Over an ancient scroll I bent,
Steeping my soul in wise content,
Nor paused a moment, save to chide
A low voice whispering at my side.

I wove beneath the stars' pale shine
A dream, half human, half divine;
And shook off (not to break the charm)
A little hand laid on my arm.

I read; until my heart would glow
With the great deeds of long ago;
Nor heard, while with those mighty dead,
Pass to and fro a faltering tread.

On the old theme I pondered long,
The struggle between right and wrong;
I could not check such visions high,
To soothe a little quivering sigh.

I tried to solve the problem—Life;
Dreaming of that mysterious strife,
How could I leave such reasonings wise,
To answer two blue pleading eyes?

I strove how best to give, and when
My blood to save my fellow-men—
How could I turn aside, to look
At snowdrops laid upon my book?

Now Time has fled—the word is strange,
Something there is of pain and change;
My books lie closed upon the shelf;
I miss the old heart in myself.

I miss the sunbeams in my room,
It was not always wrapped in gloom:
I miss my dreams—they fade so fast,
Or flit into some trivial past.

The great stream of the world goes by;
None care, or heed, or question, why
I, the lone student, cannot raise
My voice or hand as in old days.

No echo seems to wake again
My heart to anything but pain,
Save when a dream of twilight brings
The fluttering of an angel's wings!

LINGER, O GENTLE TIME.

Linger, O gentle Time,
Linger, O radiant grace of bright To-day!
Let not the hours' chime
Call thee away,
But linger near me still with fond delay.

Linger, for thou art mine!
What dearer treasures can the future hold?
What sweeter flowers than thine
Can she unfold?
What secrets tell my heart thou hast not told?

Oh, linger in thy flight!
For shadows gather round, and should we part,
A dreary, starless night
May fill my heart—
Then pause and linger yet ere thou depart.

Linger, I ask no more—
Thou art enough forever—thou alone:
What future can restore,
When thou art flown,
All that I hold from thee and call my own?

LIFE AND DEATH.

"What is Life, father?"
"A battle, my child,
Where the strongest lance may fail,
Where the wariest eyes may be beguiled,
And the stoutest heart may quail;
Where the foes are gathered on every hand,
And rest not day or night,
And the feeble little ones must stand
In the thickest of the fight."

"What is Death, father?"
"The rest, my child,
When the strife and the toil are o'er;
The angel of God, who, calm and mild,
Says we need fight no more;
Who, driving away the demon band,
Bids the din of the battle cease;
Takes banner and spear from our failing hand,
And proclaims an eternal peace."

"Let me die, father! I tremble and fear
To yield in that terrible strife!"

"The crown must be won for Heaven, dear,
In the battle-field of life:
My child, though thy foes are strong and tried,
He loveth the weak and small;
The angels of heaven are on thy side,
And God is over all!"

BE STRONG.

Be strong to *hope*, O Heart!
Though day is bright,
The stars can only shine
In the dark night.

Digitized by Google

Be strong, O Heart of mine,
  Look toward the light!

Be strong to *bear*, O Heart!
  Nothing is vain:
Srive not, for life is care,
  And God sends pain;
Heaven is above, and there
  Rest will remain!

Be strong to *love*, O Heart!
  Love knows not wrong;
Didst thou love—creatures even,
  Life were not long;
Didst thou love God in Heaven,
  Thou wouldst be strong!

GOD'S GIFTS.

God gave to Earth: a child,
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn,
Earth took it coldly and in scorn,
Cursing the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name,
For heritage, a tainted fame,
Then cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right,
All ray of God's most holy light,
She curtained closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away,
Ready to look again, the day
Its little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played,
Where sin, and sin alone, was made
The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care,
He learned the tasks they taught him there;
Black sin for lesson—oaths for prayer.

Then Earth arose, and, in her might,
To vindicate her injured right,
Thrust him in deeper depths of night;

Branding him with a deeper brand
Of shame he could not understand,
The felon outcast of the land.

God gave a gift to Earth: a child,
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried
Her joy and triumph far and wide,
Till echo answered to her pride.

She blessed the hour when first he came
To take the crown of pride and fame,
Wreathed through long ages for his name.

Then bent her utmost art and skill
To train the supple mind and will,
And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strewed his morning path with flowers,
And Love, in tender dropping showers,
Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light,
A halo round the Good and Right,
To tempt and charm the baby's sight.

And every step, of work or play,
Was lit by some such dazzling ray,
Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said,
Let added honors now be shed
On such a noble heart and head!

O World, both gifts were pure and bright,
Holy and sacred in God's sight:
God will judge them and thee aright!

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death,
  Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,
  Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away,
  Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasures dim,
To the eternal splendor of the day;
  And many a troubled heart still calls for him!

Spirits too tender for the battle here
  Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its charms;
And children, shuddering at a world so drear,
  Have smiling passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain,
  Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart:
Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain,
  And bid the shadow of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time, nor might,
  Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope restore,
(Dear as to long-blind eyes recovered sight,)
  He will give back those who are gone before.

Oh, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes
  Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,
  And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

CHANGES.

Mourn, O rejoicing heart!
  The hours are flying;
Each one some treasure takes,
Each one some blossom breaks,
  And leaves it dying;

Digitized by Google

The chill dark night draws near,
  Thy sun will soon depart,
  And leave thee sighing;
Then mourn, rejoicing heart,
  The hours are flying!

Rejoice, O grieving heart!
  The hours fly fast;
With each some sorrow dies,
With each some shadow flies,
  Until at last
The red dawn in the east
  Bids weary night depart,
  And pain is past.
Rejoice then, grieving heart,
  The hours fly fast!

THE WAYSIDE INN.

A LITTLE past the village
  The Inn stood, low and white;
Green shady trees behind it,
  And an orchard on the right;
Where over the green paling
  The red-cheeked apples hung,
As if to watch how wearily
  The sign-board creaked and swung.

The heavy-laden branches,
  Over the road hung low,
Reflected fruit or blossom
  From the wayside well below;
Where children, drawing water,
  Looked up and paused to see,
Amid the apple-branches,
  A purple Judas-Tree.

The road stretched winding onward
  For many a weary mile—
So dusty, foot-sore wanderers
  Would pause and rest awhile—
And panting horses halted,
  And travellers loved to tell
The quiet of the wayside inn,
  The orchard, and the well.

Here Maurice dwelt, and often
  The sunburnt boy would stand
Gazing upon the distance,
  And shading with his hand
His eyes, while watching vainly
  For travellers who might need
His aid to loose the bridle,
  And tend the weary steed.

And once (the boy remembered
  That morning many a day—
The dew lay on the hawthorn,
  The bird sang on the spray)
A train of horsemen, nobler
  Than he had seen before,
Up from the distance galloped,
  And halted at the door.

Upon a milk-white pony,
  Fit for a faery queen,
Was the loveliest little damsel
  His eyes had ever seen:
A serving-man was holding
  The leading rein, to guide
The pony and its mistress,
  Who cantered by his side.

Her sunny ringlets round her
  A golden cloud had made,
While her large hat was keeping
  Her calm blue eyes in shade;
One hand held fast the silken reins
  To keep her steed in check,
The other pulled his tangled mane,
  Or stroked his glossy neck.

And as the boy brought water,
  And loosed the rein, he heard
The sweetest voice that thanked him
  In one low gentle word;
She turned her blue eyes from him,
  Looked up, and smiled to see
The hanging purple blossoms
  Upon the Judas-Tree;

And showed it with a gesture,
  Half pleading, half command,
Till he broke the fairest blossom,
  And laid it in her hand;
And she tied it to the saddle
  With a ribbon from her hair,
While her happy laugh rang gaily,
  Like silver on the air.

But the champing steeds were rested—
  The horsemen now spurred on,
And down the dusty highway
  They vanished and were gone.
Years passed, and many a traveller
  Paused at the old inn-door,
But the little milk-white pony
  And the child returned no more.

Years passed, the apple-branches
  A deeper shadow shed;
And many a time the Judas-Tree,
  Blossom and leaf, lay dead;
When on the loitering western breeze
  Came the bells' merry sound,
And flowery arches rose, and flags
  And banners waved around.

Maurice stood there expectant:
  The bridal train would stay
Some moments at the inn-door,
  The eager watchers say;
They come—the cloud of dust draws near—
  'Mid all the state and pride,
He only sees the golden hair
  And blue eyes of the bride.

The same, yet, ah, still fairer;
  He knew the face once more
That bent above the pony's neck
  Years past at that inn-door:
Her shy and smiling eyes looked round,
  Unconscious of the place,
Unconscious of the eager gaze
  He fixed upon her face.

He plucked a blossom from the tree—
  The Judas-Tree—and cast

Digitized by Google

Its purple fragrance toward the bride,
  A message from the Past.
The signal came, the horses plunged—
  Once more she smiled around:
The purple blossom in the dust
  Lay trampled on the ground.

Again the slow years fleeted,
  Their passage only known
By the height the Passion-flower
  Around the porch had grown;
And many a passing traveller
  Paused at the old inn-door,
But the bride so fair and blooming,
  The bride returned no more.

One winter morning, Maurice,
  Watching the branches bare,
Rustling and waving dimly
  In the gray and misty air,
Saw blazoned on a carriage
  Once more the well-known shield,
The stars and azure fleurs-de-lis
  Upon a silver field.

He looked—was that pale woman,
  So grave, so worn, so sad,
The child once young and smiling,
  The bride once fair and glad?
What grief had dimmed that glory,
  And brought that dark eclipse
Upon her blue eyes' radiance,
  And paled those trembling lips?

What memory of past sorrow,
  What stab of present pain,
Brought that deep look of anguish,
  That watched the dismal rain,
That watched (with the absent spirit
  That looks yet does not see)
The dead and leafless branches
  Upon the Judas-Tree?

The slow dark months crept onward
  Upon their icy way,
Till April broke in showers,
  And spring smiled forth in May;
Upon the apple-blossoms
  The sun shone bright again,
When slowly up the highway
  Came a long funeral train.

The bells tolled slowly, sadly,
  For a noble spirit fled;
Slowly, in pomp and honor,
  They bore the quiet dead.
Upon a black-plumed charger
  One rode who held a shield,
Where stars and azure fleurs-de-lis
  Shone on a silver field.

'Mid all that homage given
  To a fluttering heart at rest,
Perhaps an honest sorrow
  Dwelt only in one breast.
One by the inn-door standing
  Watched with fast-dropping tears
The long procession passing,
  And thought of bygone years.

The boyish, silent homage
  To child and bride unknown,
The pitying, tender sorrow
  Kept in his heart alone,
Now laid upon the coffin
  With a purple flower, might be
Told to the cold, dead sleeper;
  The rest could only see
A fragrant purple blossom,
  Plucked from a Judas-Tree.

INCOMPLETENESS.

Nothing resting in its own completeness
Can have worth or beauty: but alone
Because it leads and tends to further sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,
Gracious though it be, of her blue hours;
But is hidden in her tender leaning
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair, because the mists fade slowly
Into Day, which floods the world with light;
Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy
Just because it ends in starry night.

Childhood's smiles unconscious graces borrow
From Strife, that in a far-off future lies;
And angel glances (veiled now by Life's sorrow)
Draw our hearts to some belovèd eyes.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Toward a truer, deeper Life above;
Human Love is sweetest when it leadeth
To a more divine and perfect Love.

Learn the mystery of Progression duly:
Do not call each glorious change, Decay;
But know we only hold our treasures truly,
When it seems as if they passed away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness;
In that want their beauty lies: they roll
Toward some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

A LEGEND OF BREGENZ.

Girt round with rugged mountains
  The fair Lake Constance lies;
In her blue heart reflected
  Shine back the starry skies;
And, watching each white cloudlet
  Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of heaven
  Lies on our earth below!

Midnight is there: and Silence,
  Enthroned in heaven, looks down
Upon her own calm mirror,
  Upon a sleeping town:

Digitized by Google

For Bregenz, that quaint city
  Upon the Tyrol shore,
Has stood above Lake Constance
  A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,
  From off their rocky steep,
Have cast their trembling shadow
  For ages on the deep:
Mountain, and lake, and valley,
  A sacred legend know,
Of how the town was saved, one night,
  Three hundred years ago.

Far from her home and kindred,
  A Tyrol maid had fled,
To serve in the Swiss valleys,
  And toil for daily bread;
And every year that fleeted
  So silently and fast,
Seemed to bear farther from her
  The memory of the past.

She served kind, gentle masters,
  Nor asked for rest or change;
Her friends seemed no more new ones,
  Their speech seemed no more strange;
And when she led her cattle
  To pasture every day,
She ceased to look and wonder
  On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz,
  With longing and with tears;
Her Tyrol home seemed faded
  In a deep mist of years;
She heeded not the rumors
  Of Austrian war and strife;
Each day she rose contented,
  To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children
  Would clustering round her stand,
She sang them ancient ballads
  Of her own native land;
And when at morn and evening
  She knelt before God's throne,
The accents of her childhood
  Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt: the valley
  More peaceful year by year;
When suddenly strange portents
  Of some great deed seemed near.
The golden corn was bending
  Upon its fragile stalk,
While farmers, heedless of their fields,
  Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered,
  With looks cast on the ground;
With anxious faces, one by one,
  The women gathered round;
All talk of flax, or spinning,
  Or work, was put away;
The very children seemed afraid
  To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow
  With strangers from the town,
Some secret plan discussing,
  The men walked up and down.
Yet now and then seemed watching
  A strange uncertain gleam,
That looked like lances 'mid the trees,
  That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,
  Then care and doubt were fled;
With jovial laugh they feasted;
  The board was nobly spread.
The elder of the village
  Rose up, his glass in hand,
And cried, "We drink the downfall
  Of an accursed land!

"The night is growing darker,
  Ere one more day is flown,
Bregenz, our foemen's stronghold,
  Bregenz shall be our own!"
The women shrank in terror
  (Yet Pride, too, had her part),
But one poor Tyrol maiden
  Felt death within her heart.

Before her stood fair Bregenz;
  Once more her towers arose;
What were the friends beside her?
  Only her country's foes;
The faces of her kinsfolk,
  The days of childhood flown,
The echoes of her mountains,
  Reclaimed her as their own!

Nothing she heard around her,
  (Though shouts rang forth again,)
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,
  The pasture, and the plain;
Before her eyes one vision,
  And in her heart one cry,
That said, "Go forth, save Bregenz,
  And then, if need be, die!"

With trembling haste and breathless,
  With noiseless step she sped;
Horses and weary cattle
  Were standing in the shed;
She loosed the strong, white charger,
  That fed from out her hand,
She mounted, and she turned his head
  Toward her native land.

Out—out into the darkness—
  Faster, and still more fast;
The smooth grass flies behind her,
  The chestnut wood is past;
She looks up; clouds are heavy:
  Why is her steed so slow?—
Scarcely the wind beside them
  Can pass them as they go.

"Faster!" she cries, "O faster!"
  Eleven the church-bells chime:
"O God," she cries, "help Bregenz,
  And bring me there in time!"
But louder than bells' ringing,
  Or lowing of the kine,
Grows nearer in the midnight
  The rushing of the Rhine.

Digitized by Google

Shall not the roaring waters
  Their headlong gallop check?
The steed draws back in terror,
  She leans upon his neck
To watch the flowing darkness;
  The bank is high and steep;
One pause—he staggers forward,
  And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,
  And looser throws the rein;
Her steed must breast the waters
  That dash above his mane.
How gallantly, how nobly,
  He struggles through the foam,
And see—in the far distance
  Shine out the lights of home!

Up the steep banks he bears her,
  And now they rush again
Toward the heights of Bregenz,
  That tower above the plain.
They reach the gate of Bregenz,
  Just as the midnight rings,
And out come serf and soldier
  To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved! Ere daylight
  Her battlements are manned;
Defiance greets the army
  That marches on the land.
And if to deeds heroic
  Should endless fame be paid,
Bregenz does well to honor
  The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,
  And yet upon the hill
An old stone gateway rises,
  To do her honor still.
And there, when Bregenz women
  Sit spinning in the shade,
They see in quaint old carving
  The Charger and the Maid.

And when to guard old Bregenz,
  By gateway, street, and tower,
The warder paces all night long
  And calls each passing hour—
"Nine," "ten," "eleven," he cries aloud,
  And then (O crown of Fame!)
When midnight pauses in the skies,
  He calls the maiden's name!

A LITTLE LONGER.

A LITTLE longer yet—a little longer,
Shall violets bloom for thee, and sweet birds sing;
And the lime-branches, where soft winds are blowing,
Shall murmur the sweet promise of the spring!

A little longer yet—a little longer,
Thou shalt behold the quiet of the morn;
While tender grasses and awakening flowers
Send up a golden mist to greet the dawn!

A little longer yet—a little longer,
The tenderness of twilight shall be thine,
The rosy clouds that float o'er dying daylight,
Nor fade till trembling stars begin to shine.

A little longer yet—a little longer,
Shall starry night be beautiful for thee;
And the cold moon shall look through the blue silence,
Flooding her silver path upon the sea.

A little longer yet—a little longer,
Life shall be thine; life with its power to will;
Life with its strength to bear, to love, to conquer,
Bringing its thousand joys thy heart to fill.

A little longer yet—a little longer,
The voices thou hast loved shall charm thine ear,
And thy true heart, that now beats quick to hear them,
A little longer yet shall hold them dear.

A little longer yet—joy while thou mayest;
Love and rejoice! for time has naught in store:
And soon the darkness of the grave shall bid thee
Love and rejoice and feel and know no more.

A little longer still—Patience, Belovèd:
A little longer still, ere Heaven unroll
The Glory, and the Brightness, and the Wonder,
Eternal and divine, that wait thy Soul!

A little longer ere Life true, immortal,
(Not this our shadowy Life,) will be thine own;
And thou shalt stand where winged Archangels worship,
And trembling bow before the great white Throne.

A little longer still, and Heaven awaits thee,
And fills thy spirit with great delight;
Then our pale joys will seem a dream forgotten,
Our Sun a darkness, and our Day a Night.

A little longer, and thy Heart, Belovèd,
Shall beat forever with a Love divine;
And joy so pure, so mighty, so eternal,
No creature knows and lives, will then be thine.

A little longer yet—and angel-voices
Shall ring in heavenly chant upon thine ear;
Angels and Saints await thee, and God needs thee:
Belovèd, can we bid thee linger here!

THANKFULNESS.

MY God I thank Thee who hast made
  The earth so bright;
So full of splendor and of joy,
  Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here,
  Noble and right!

Digitized by Google

I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot of earth
Some love is found.

I thank Thee *more* that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that Earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

For Thou knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings,
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings,
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things!

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept
The best in store;
We have enough, yet not too much
To long for more:
A yearning for a deeper peace,
Not known before.

I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
A perfect rest—
Nor ever shall until they lean
On Jesus' breast!

MURMURS.

Why wilt thou make bright music
Give forth a sound of pain?
Why wilt thou weave fair flowers
Into a weary chain?

Why turn each cool gray shadow
Into a world of fears?
Why say the winds are wailing?
Why call the dew-drops tears?

The voices of happy Nature,
And the Heaven's sunny gleam,
Reprove thy sick heart's fancies,
Upbraid thy foolish dream.

Listen, and I will tell thee
The song Creation sings,
From the humming of bees in the heather,
To the flutter of angels' wings.

An echo rings forever,
The sound can never cease;
It speaks to God of glory,
It speaks to Earth of peace.

Not alone did angels sing it
To the poor shepherds' ear;
But the spherèd Heavens chant it,
While listening ages hear.

Above thy peevish wailing
Rises that holy song;
Above Earth's foolish clamor,
Above the voice of wrong.

No creature of God's too lowly
To murmur peace and praise:
When the starry nights grow silent,
Then speak the sunny days.

So leave thy sick heart's fancies,
And lend thy little voice
To the silver song of glory
That bids the world rejoice.

A CASTLE IN THE AIR.

I built myself a castle,
So noble, grand, and fair;
I built myself a castle,
A castle—in the air.

The fancies of my twilights
That fade in sober truth,
The longing of my sorrow,
And the vision of my youth;

The plans of joyful futures;
So dear they used to seem;
The prayer that rose unbidden,
Half prayer—and half a dream;

The hopes that died unuttered
Within this heart of mine;—
For all these tender treasures
My castle was the shrine.

I looked at all the castles
That rise to grace the land,
But I never saw another
So stately or so grand.

And now you see it shattered,
My castle in the air;
It lies, a dreary ruin,
All desolate and bare.

I cannot build another,
I saw that one decay;
And strength and heart and courage
Died out the self-same day.

Yet still, beside that ruin,
With hopes as deep and fond,
I waited with an infinite longing,
Only—I look beyond.

Digitized by Google

DINAH M. MULOCK CRAIK.

Dinah Maria Mulock was born at Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, in 1826. Her father was a clergyman of the Established Church. Her first book, "The Ogilvies," appeared in 1849 and was at once successful. It has been followed by a long series of similar novels, of which "John Halifax, Gentleman," published in 1857, is the masterpiece. Besides these novels, she has published "Fair France; Impressions of a Traveller," three volumes of short stories, numerous books for the young, "Sermons out of Church," and poems. The first collection of her poems appeared in 1860; enlarged edition, 1874. All of her works have been republished in the United States, where they are as popular as in her own country. A literary pension of £60 was awarded to her in 1864. In 1865 she married George Lillie Craik the younger.

PHILIP MY KING.

"Who bears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty."

Look at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king,
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities:
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king.

O the day when thou goest a wooing,
Philip my king!
When those beautiful lips 'gin suing,
And some gentle heart's bars undoing,
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love-glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair,
For we that love, ah! we love so blindly,
Philip my king.

Up from thy sweet mouth—up to thy brow,
Philip my king!
The spirit that there lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen among his peers:
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer,
Let me behold thee in future years;—
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king.

—A wreath not of gold, but palm. One day,
Philip my king,
Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and gray:
Rebels within thee and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious,
Martyr, yet monarch: till angels shout
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip the king!"

THOUGHTS IN A WHEAT-FIELD.

"The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels."

In his wide fields walks the Master,
In his fair fields, ripe for harvest,
Where the evening sun shines slant-wise
On the rich ears heavy bending;
Saith the Master, "It is time."
Though no leaf shows brown decadence,
And September's nightly frost-bite
Only reddens the horizon,
"It is full time," saith the Master,
The wise Master, "it is time."

Lo, he looks. That look compelling
Brings his laborers to the harvest;
Quick they gather, as in autumn
Passage-birds in cloudy eddies
Drop upon the seaside fields;
White wings have they, and white raiment,
White feet shod with swift obedience,
Each lays down his golden palm-branch,
And uprears his sickle shining,
"Speak, O Master—is it time?"

O'er the field the servants hasten,
Where the full-stored ears droop downward,
Humble with their weight of harvest:
Where the empty ears wave upward,
And the gay tares flaunt in rows:
But the sickles, the sharp sickles,
Flash new dawn at their appearing,
Songs are heard in earth and heaven,
For the reapers are the angels,
And it is the harvest-time.

O Great Master, are thy footsteps
Even now upon the mountains?
Art thou walking in thy wheat-field?
Are the snowy-winged reapers
Gathering in the silent air?
Are thy signs abroad, the glowing
Of the distant sky, blood-reddened—

Digitized by Google

And the near fields trodden, blighted,
Choked by gaudy tares triumphant—
Sure, it must be harvest-time?

Who shall know the Master's coming?
Whether it be at dawn or sunset,
When night dews weigh down the wheat-ears,
Or while noon rides high in heaven,
Sleeping lies the yellow field?
Only, may thy voice, Good Master,
Peal above the reapers' chorus,
And dull sound of sheaves slow falling—
"Gather all into my garner,
For it is my harvest-time."

FOUR YEARS.

At the midsummer, when the hay was down,
Said I, mournfully: "My life is at its prime,
Yet bare lie my meadows, shorn before the time,
In my scorched woodlands the leaves are turning brown.
It is the hot midsummer, and the hay is down."

At the midsummer, when the hay was down,
Stood she by the streamlet, young and very fair,
With the first white bindweed twisted in her hair—
Hair that drooped like birch-boughs—all in her simple gown.
For it was in midsummer, and the hay was down.
At the midsummer, when the hay was down,
Crept she, a willing bride, close into my breast:
Low piled the thunder-clouds had drifted to the west—
Red-eyed out glared the sun, like knight from leaguered town,
That eve in high midsummer, when the hay was down.

It is midsummer—all the hay is down;
Close to her bosom press I dying eyes,
Praying, "God shield thee till we meet in Paradise!"
Bless her in Love's name who was my brief life's crown—
And I go at midsummer, when the hay is down.

THE WIND AT NIGHT.

O sudden blast, that through this silence black
Sweeps past my windows,
Coming and going with invisible track
As death or sin does—

Why scare me, lying sick, and, save thine own,
Hearing no voices?
Why mingle with a helpless human moan
Thy mad rejoices?

Why not come gently, as good angels come
To souls departing,
Floating among the shadows of the room
With eyes light-darting—
Bringing faint airs of balm that seem to rouse
Thoughts of a Far Land,
Then binding softly upon weary brows
Death's poppy-garland?

O fearful blast, I shudder at thy sound,
Like heathen mortal
Who saw the Three that mark life's doomèd bound
Sit at his portal.

Thou might'st be laden with sad, shrieking souls,
Carried unwilling
From their known earth to the unknown stream that rolls
All anguish stilling.

Fierce wind, will the Death-angel come like thee soon, soon to bear me
—*Whither?* what mysteries may unfold to me,
What terrors scare me?

Shall I go wand'ring on through empty space,
As on earth, lonely?
Or seek through myriad spirit-ranks one face,
And miss that only?

Shall I not then drop down from sphere to sphere
Palsied and aimless?
Or will my being change so, that both fear
And grief die nameless?

Rather I pray Him who Himself is Love,
Out of whose essence
We all do spring, and toward Him tending, move
Back to His presence,

That even His brightness may not quite efface
The soul's earth-features,
That the dear human likeness each may trace
Glorified creatures;

That we may not cease loving, only taught
Holier desiring;
More faith, more patience; with more wisdom fraught,
Higher aspiring.

That we may do all work we left undone
Here—through unmeetness;
From height to height celestial passing on
Toward full completeness.

Then, strong Azrael, be thy supreme call
Soft as spring-breezes,
Or like this blast, whose loud fiend-festival
My heart's blood freezes,

I will not fear thee. If thou safely keep
My soul, God's giving,
And my soul's soul, I, wakening from death-sleep,
Shall first know living.

A FABLE.

Silent and sunny was the way
Where Youth and I danced on together:
So winding and embowered o'er,
We could not see one rood before.

Digitized by Google

Nevertheless all merrily
We bounded onward, Youth and I,
Leashed closely in a silken tether:
(Well-a-day, well-a-day!)
Ah Youth, ah Youth, but I would fain
See thy sweet foolish face again!

It came to pass, one morn of May,
All in a swoon of golden weather,
That I through green leaves fluttering
Saw Joy uprise on Psyche wing:
Eagerly, too eagerly
We followed after—Youth and I—
Till suddenly he slipped the tether:
(Well-a-day, well-a-day!)
"Where art thou, Youth?" I cried. In vain;
He never more came back again.

Yet onward through the devious way
In rain or shine, I recked not whether,
Like many another maddened boy
I tracked my Psyche-wingèd Joy;
Till, curving round the bowery lane,
Lo—in the pathway stood pale Pain,
And we met face to face together:
(Well-a-day, well-a-day!)
"Whence comest thou?"—and I writhed in vain—
"Unloose thy cruel grasp, O Pain!"

But he would not. Since, day by day
He has ta'en up Youth's silken tether
And changed it into iron bands,
So through rich vales and barren lands
Solemnly, all solemnly
March we united, he and I;
And we have grown such friends together
(Well-a-day, well-a-day!)
I and this my brother Pain,
I think we 'll never part again.

LABOR IS PRAYER.

LABORARE est orare:
We, black-visaged sons of toil,
From the coal-mine and the anvil
And the delving of the soil—
From the loom, the wharf, the warehouse,
And the ever-whirling mill,
Out of grim and hungry silence
Raise a weak voice small and shrill;—
Laborare est orare:
Man, dost hear us? God, He will.

We who just can keep from starving,
Sickly wives—not always mild:
Trying not to curse Heaven's bounty
When it sends another child—
We who, worn out, doze on Sundays
O'er the Book we strive to read,
Cannot understand the parson
Or the catechism and creed.
Laborare est orare:—
Then, good sooth, we pray indeed.

We, poor women, feeble-natured,
Large of heart, in wisdom small,
Who the world's incessant battle
Cannot understand at all,
All the mysteries of the churches,
All the troubles of the state—
Whom child-smiles teach "God is loving,"
And child-coffins, "God is great:"
Laborare est orare:—
We too at His footstool wait.

Laborare est orare;
Hear it, ye of spirit poor,
Who sit crouching at the threshold
While your brethren force the door;
Ye whose ignorance stands wringing
Rough hands, seamed with toil, nor dares
Lift so much as eyes to heaven—
Lo! all life this truth declares,
Laborare est orare;
And the whole earth rings with prayers.

A SILLY SONG.

"O HEART, my heart!" she said, and heard
His mate the blackbird calling,
While through the sheen of the garden green
May rain was softly falling—
Ay, softly, softly falling.

The butter-cups across the field
Made sunshine rifts of splendor:
The round snow-bud of the thorn in the wood
Peeped through its leafage tender,
As the rain came softly falling.

"O heart, my heart!" she said and smiled,
"There's not a tree of the valley,
Or a leaf I wis which the rain's soft kiss
Freshens in yonder alley,
Where the drops keep ever falling,—

"There's not a foolish flower i' the grass,
Or bird through the woodland calling,
So glad again of the coming of rain
As I of these tears now falling—
These happy tears down falling."

AN HONEST VALENTINE.

Returned from the Dead-Letter Office.

THANK ye for your kindness,
Lady fair and wise,
Though love's famed for blindness,
Lovers—hem! for lies.
Courtship's mighty pretty,
Wedlock a sweet sight;—
Should I (from the city,
A plan man, Miss—) write,
Ere we spouse-and-wive it,
Just one honest line,
Could you e'er forgive it,
Pretty Valentine?

Honey-moon quite over,
If I less should scan
You with eye of lover
Than of mortal man?

Digitized by Google

Seeing my fair charmer
  Curl hair spire on spire,
All in paper armour,
  By the parlor-fire;
Gown that wants a stitch in
  Hid by apron fine,
Scolding in her kitchen—
  O fie, Valentine!

Should I come home surly
  Vexed with Fortune's frown,
Find a hurly-burly,
  House turned upside down,
Servants all a-snarl, or
  Cleaning steps or stair:
Breakfast still in parlor,
  Dinner—anywhere:
Shall I to cold bacon
  Meekly fall and dine?
No—or I'm mistaken
  Much, my Valentine.

What if we should quarrel?
  —Bless you, all folks do:—
Will you take the war ill,
  Yet half like it too?
When I storm and jangle,
  Obstinate, absurd,
Will you sit and wrangle
  Just for the last word,—
Or, while poor Love crying
  Upon tiptoe stands,
Ready plumed for flying—
  Will you smile, shake hands,
And the truth beholding,
  With a kiss divine
Stop my rough mouth's scolding?—
  Bless you, Valentine!

If, should times grow harder,
  We have lack of pelf,
Little in the larder,
  Less upon the shelf;
Will you, never tearful,
  Make your old gowns do,
Mend my stockings, cheerful,
  And pay visits few?
Crave nor gift nor donor,
  Old days ne'er regret,
Seek no friend save Honor,
  Dread no foe but Debt;
Meet ill-fortune steady,
  Hand to hand with mine,
Like a gallant lady—
  Will you, Valentine?

Then, whatever weather
  Come—or shine, or shade,
We 'll set out together,
  Not a whit afraid.
Age is ne'er alarming—
  I shall find, I ween,
You at sixty charming
  As at sweet sixteen:
Let 's pray, nothing loath, dear,
  That our funeral may
Make one date serve both, dear,
  As our marriage-day.
Then, come joy or sorrow,
  Thou art mine—I thine.
So we 'll wed to-morrow,
  Dearest Valentine.

BY THE ALMA RIVER.

Willie, fold your little hands;
  Let it drop, that "soldier" toy:
Look where father's picture stands—
  Father, who here kissed his boy
Not two months since—father kind,
Who this night may— Never mind
Mother's sob, my Willie dear,
Call aloud that He may hear
Who is God of battles, say,
"Oh, keep father safe this day
By the Alma River."

Ask no more, child. Never heed
  Either Russ, or Frank, or Turk,
Right of nations or of creed,
  Chance-poised victory's bloody work:
Any flag i' the wind may roll
On thy heights, Sebastopol;
Willie, all to you and me
Is that spot where'er it be,
Where he stands—no other word!
Stands—God sure the child's prayer heard—
By the Alma River.

Willie, listen to the bells
  Ringing through the town to-day.
That 's for victory. Ah, no knells
  For the many swept away—
Hundreds—thousands! Let us weep,
We who need not—just to keep
Reason steady in my brain
Till the morning comes again,
Till the third dread morning tell
Who they were that fought and *fell*
By the Alma River.

Come, we 'll lay us down, my child,
  Poor the bed is, poor and hard;
Yet thy father, far exiled,
  Sleeps upon the open sward,
Dreaming of us two at home:
Or beneath the starry dome
Digs out trenches in the dark,
Where he buries—Willie, mark—
Where *he buries* those who died
Fighting bravely at his side
  By the Alma River.

Willie, Willie, go to sleep,
  God will keep us, O my boy;
He will make the dull hours creep
  Faster, and send news of joy,
When I need not shrink to meet
Those dread placards in the street,
Which for weeks will ghastly stare
In some eyes— Child, say thy prayer
Once again; a different one;
Say, "O God, Thy will be done
  By the Alma River."

ROTHESAY BAY.

Fu' yellow lie the corn-rigs
  Far doun the braid hill-side;
It is the brawest harst-field
  Alang the shores o' Clyde—

Digitized by Google

And I 'm a puir harst-lassie
That stan's the lee-lang day
Shearing the corn-rigs of Ardbeg
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

O I had ance a true-love—
Now, I hae nane ava;
And I had ance three brithers,
But I hae tint them a'.
My father and my mither
Sleep i' the mools this day.
I sit my lane amang the rigs
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

It 's a bonnie bay at morning,
And bonnier at the noon,
But it 's bonniest when the sun draps
And red comes up the moon;
When the mist creeps o'er the Cumbrays,
And Arran peaks are gray,
And the great black hills, like sleepin' kings,
Sit grand roun' Rothesay Bay.

Then a bit sigh stirs my bosom,
And a wee tear blin's my e'e—
And I think o' that far Countrie
What I wad like to be!
But I rise content i' the morning
To wark while wark I may
I' the yellow harst-field of Ardbeg
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

LIVING:

AFTER A DEATH.

"That friend of mine who lives in God."

O Live!
(Thus seems it we should say to our beloved—
Each held by such slight links, so oft removed;)
And I can let thee go to the world's end,
All precious names, companion, love, spouse, friend,
Seal up in an eternal silence gray,
Like a closed grave till resurrection-day:
All sweet remembrances, hopes, dreams, desires,
Heap, as one heaps up sacrificial fires:
Then, turning, consecrate by loss, and proud
Of penury—go back into the loud
Tumultuous world again with never a moan—
Save that which whispers still, "My own, my own,"
Unto the same broad sky whose arch immense
Enfolds us both like the arm of Providence:
And thus, contented, I could live or die,
With never clasp of hand or meeting eye
On this side Paradise—While thee I see
Living to God, thou art alive to me.

O live!
And I, methinks, can let all dear rights go,
Fond duties melt away like April snow,
And sweet, sweet hopes, that took a life to weave,
Vanish like gossamers of autumn eve.
Nay, sometimes seems it I could even bear
To lay down humbly this love-crown I wear,
Steal from my palace, helpless, hopeless, poor,
And see another queen it at the door—
If only that the king had done no wrong,
If this my palace, where I dwelt so long,
Were not defiled by falsehood entering in:
There is no loss but change, no death but sin,
No parting, save the slow corrupting pain
Of murdered faith that never lives again.

O live!
(So endeth faint the low pathetic cry
Of love, whom death has taught love cannot die.)
And I can stand above the daisy-bed,
The only pillow for thy dearest head,
There cover up forever from my sight
My own, my earthly all of earth delight;
And enter the sea-cave of widowed years,
Where far, far off the trembling gleam appears
Through which thy heavenly image slipped away,
And waits to meet me at the open day.
Only to me, my love, only to me.
This cavern underneath the moaning sea;
This long, long life that I alone must tread,
To whom the living seem most like the dead—
Thou wilt be safe out on the happy shore:
He who in God lives, liveth evermore.

IN OUR BOAT.

Stars trembling o'er us and sunset before us,
Mountains in shadow and forests asleep;
Down the dim river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah breathe not—there 's peace on the deep.

Come not, pale Sorrow, flee till to-morrow,
Rest softly falling o'er eyelids that weep;
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah breathe not, there 's peace on the deep.

As the waves cover the depths we glide over,
So let the past in forgetfulness sleep,
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah breathe not, there 's peace on the deep.

Heaven shine above us, bless all that love us,
All whom we love in thy tenderness keep!
While down the river we float on forever,
Speak not, ah breathe not, there 's peace on the deep.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MOWING.

All shimmering in the morning shine
And diamonded with dew,
And quivering in the scented wind
That thrills its green heart through—
The little field, the smiling field
With all its flowers a-blowing,
How happy looks the golden field
The day before the mowing!

Digitized by Google

All still 'neath the departing light,
  Twilight, though void of stars,
Save where, low westering, Venus hides
  From the red eye of Mars;
How quiet lies the silent field
  With all its beauties glowing:
Just stirring—like a child asleep—
  The night before the mowing.

Sharp steel, inevitable hand,
  Cut keen, cut kind! Our field
We know full well must be laid low
  Before its wealth it yield:
Labor and mirth and plenty blest
  Its blameless death bestowing:
And yet we weep, and yet we weep,
  The night before the mowing.

OCTOBER.

It is no joy to me to sit
  On dreamy summer eves,
When silently the timid moon
  Kisses the sleeping leaves,
And all things through the fair hushed earth
  Love, rest—but nothing grieves.
Better I like old Autumn
  With his hair tossed to and fro,
Firm striding o'er the stubble-fields
  When the equinoctials blow.

When shrinkingly the sun creeps up
  Through misty mornings cold,
And Robin on the orchard-hedge
  Sings cheerily and bold,
While heavily the frosted plum
  Drops downward on the mould—
And as he passes, autumn
  Into earth's lap does throw
Brown apples gay in a game of play,
  As the equinoctials blow.

When the spent year its carol sinks
  Into a humble psalm,
Asks no more for the pleasure-draught,
  But for the cup of balm,
And all its storms and sunshine bursts
  Controls to one brave calm—
Then step by step walks Autumn,
  With steady eyes that show
Nor grief nor fear, to the death of the year,
  While the equinoctials blow.

PLIGHTED.

Mine to the core of the heart, my beauty!
Mine, all mine, and for love, not duty:
Love given willingly, full and free,
Love for love's sake—as mine to thee.
  Duty 's a slave that keeps the keys,
But Love, the master, goes in and out
Of his goodly chambers with song and shout,
  Just as he please—just as he please.

Mine, from the dear head's crown, brown-golden,
To the silken foot that 's scarce beholden;
Give a few friends hand or smile,
Like a generous lady, now and awhile,
  But the sanctuary heart, that none dare win,
Keep holiest of holiest evermore;
The crowd in the aisles may watch the door,
  The high-priest only enters in.

Mine, my own, without doubts or terrors,
With all thy goodnesses, all thy errors,
Unto me and to me alone revealed,
"A spring shut up, a fountain sealed."
  Many may praise thee—praise mine as thine,
Many may love thee—I 'll love them too:
But thy heart of hearts, pure, faithful and true,
  Must be mine, mine wholly, and only mine.

Mine!—God, I thank Thee that Thou hast given
Something all mine on this side heaven:
Something as much myself to be
As this my soul which I lift to Thee:
  Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone,
Life of my life, whom Thou dost make
Two to the world for the world's work's sake—
  But each unto each, as in Thy sight, *one*.

A DEAD BABY.

Little soul, for such brief space that entered
  In this little body straight and chilly,
Little life that fluttered and departed,
  Like a moth from an unopened lily,
Little being, without name or nation,
Where is now thy place among creation?

Little darked-lashed eyes, unclosèd never,
  Little mouth, by earthly food ne'er tainted,
Little breast, that just once heaved, and settled
  In eternal slumber, white and sainted—
Child, shall I in future children's faces
See some pretty look that thine retraces?

Is this thrill that strikes across my heart-strings
  And in dew beneath my eyelid gathers,
Token of the bliss thou mightst have brought me,
  Dawning of the love they call a father's?
Do I hear through this still room a sighing
Like thy spirit to me its author crying?

Whence didst come and whither take thy journey,
  Little soul, of me and mine created?
Must thou lose us, and we thee, forever,
  O strange life, by minutes only dated?
Or new flesh assuming, just to prove us,
In some other babe return and love us?

Idle questions all: yet our beginning
  Like our ending, rests with the Life-sender,
With whom naught is lost, and naught spent vainly:
  Unto him this little one I render.
Hide the face—the tiny coffin cover:
So, our first dream, our first hope—is over.

Digitized by Google

FOR MUSIC.

Along the shore, along the shore
I see the wavelets meeting:
But thee I see—ah, never more,
For all my wild heart's beating.
The little wavelets come and go,
The tide of life ebbs to and fro,
Advancing and retreating:
But from the shore, the steadfast shore,
The sea is parted never:
And mine I hold thee evermore,
Forever and forever.

Along the shore, along the shore,
I hear the waves resounding,
But thou wilt cross them never more
For all my wild heart's bounding:
The moon comes out above the tide
And quiets all the billows wide
Her pathway bright surrounding:
Thus on the shore, the dreary shore,
I walk with weak endeavor:
I have thy love's light evermore,
Forever and forever.

SITTING ON THE SHORE.

The tide has ebbed away;
No more wild dashings 'gainst the adamant rocks,
Nor swayings amid sea-weed false that mocks
The hues of gardens gay:
No laugh of little wavelets at their play:
No lucid pools reflecting heaven's clear brow—
Both storm and calm alike are ended now.

The rocks sit gray and lone:
The shifting sand is spread so smooth and dry,
That not a tide might ever have swept by
Stirring it with rude moan:
Only some weedy fragments idly thrown
To rot beneath the sky, tell what has been:
But Desolation's self has grown serene.

Afar the mountains rise,
And the broad estuary widens out,
All sunshine; wheeling round and round about
Seaward, a white bird flies.
A bird? Nay, seems it rather in these eyes
A spirit, o'er Eternity's dim sea
Calling—"Come thou where all we glad souls be."

O life, O silent shore,
Where we sit patient; O great sea beyond
To which we turn with solemn hope and fond,
But sorrowful no more:
A little while, and then we too shall soar
Like white-winged sea-birds into the Infinite Deep:
Till then, Thou, Father—wilt our spirits keep.

AT EVEN-TIDE.

C. N.—Died, April, 1857.

What spirit is it that doth pervade
The silence of this empty room?
And as I lift my eyes, what shade
Glides off and vanishes in gloom?

I could believe this moment gone,
A known form filled that vacant chair,
That those kind eyes upon me shone
I never shall see anywhere!

The living are so far away:
But *thou*—thou seemest strangely near;
Knowest all my silent heart would say,
Its peace, its pain, its hope, its fear.

And from thy calm supernal height,
And wondrous wisdom newly won,
Smilest on all our poor delight,
And petty woe beneath the sun.

From all this coil thou hast slipped away,
As softly as a cloud departs
Along the hill-side purple gray—
Into the heaven of patient hearts.

Nothing here suffered, nothing missed,
Will ever stir from its repose
The death-smile on her lips unkissed,
Who all things loves and all things knows.

And I, who, ignorant and weak,
Of love so helpless—quick to pain,
With restless longing ever seek
The unattainable in vain,

Find it strange comfort thus to sit
While the loud world unheeded rolls,
And clasp, ere yet the fancy flit,
A friend's hand from the land of souls.

TOO LATE.

"Douglas, Douglas, tendir and tru."

Could ye come back to me, Douglas, Douglas,
In the old likeness that I knew,
I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

Never a scornful word should grieve you,
I 'd smile on you sweet as the angels do;—
Sweet as your smile on me shone ever,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

O to call back the days that are not!
My eyes were blinded, your words were few:
Do you know the truth now up in heaven,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true?

I never was worthy of you, Douglas;
Not half worthy the like of you:
Now all men beside seem to me like shadows—
I love *you*, Douglas, tender and true.

Digitized by Google

Stretch out your hand to me, Douglas, Douglas,
  Drop forgiveness from heaven like dew;
As I lay my heart on your dead heart, Douglas,
  Douglas, Douglas, tender and true.

SUMMER GONE.

Small wren, mute pecking at the last red plum
  Or twittering idly at the yellowing boughs
  Fruit-emptied, over thy forsaken house—
Birdie, that seems to come
Telling, we too have spent our little store,
Our summer 's o'er:

Poor robin, driven in by rain-storms wild
  To lie submissive under household hands
  With beating heart that no love understands,
And scarèd eye, like a child
Who only knows that he is all alone,
And summer 's gone;

Pale leaves, sent flying wide, a frightened flock
  On which the wolfish wind bursts out, and tears
  Those tender forms that lived in summer airs
Till, taken at this shock,
They, like weak hearts when sudden grief sweeps by,
Whirl, drop, and die:—

All these things, earthly, of the earth—do tell
  This earth's perpetual story; we belong
  Unto another country, and our song
Shall be no mortal knell;
Though all the year's tale, as *our* years run fast,
Mourns, "Summer 's past."

O love immortal, O perpetual youth,
  Whether in budding nooks it sits and sings
  As hundred poets in a hundred springs,
Or slaking passion's drouth
In wine-press of affliction, ever goes
Heavenward, through woes:

O youth immortal—O undying love!
  With these by winter fireside we 'll sit down
  Wearing our snows of honor like a crown;
And sing as in a grove,
Where the full nests ring out with happy cheer,
"Summer is here."

Roll round, strange years; swift seasons, come and go;
  Ye leave upon us but an outward sign;
  Ye cannot touch the inward and divine,
While God alone does know;
There sealed till summers, winters, all shall cease
In His deep peace.

Therefore uprouse, ye winds, and howl your will;
  Beat, beat, ye sobbing rains, on pane and door;
  Enter, slow-footed age, and thou, obscure
Grand Angel—not of ill;
Healer of every wound, where'er thou come
Glad, we 'll go home.

WESTWARD HO!

We should not sit us down and sigh,
  My girl, whose brow a fane appears,
Whose steadfast eyes look royally
  Backward and forward o'er the years—

The long, long years of conquered time,
  The possible years unwon, that slope
Before us in the pale sublime
  Of lives that have more faith than hope.

We dare not sit us down and dream
  Fond dreams, as idle children do:
My forehead owns too many a seam,
  And tears have worn their channels through

Your poor thin cheeks, which now I take
  'Twixt my two hands, caressing. Dear,
A little sunshine for my sake!
  Although we 're far on in the year.

Though all our violets, sweet! are dead,
  The primrose lost from fields we knew,
Who knows what harvests may be spread
  For reapers brave like me and you?

Who knows what bright October suns
  May light up distant valleys mild,
Where as our pathway downward runs
  We see Joy meet us, like a child

Who, sudden, by the roadside stands,
  To kiss the travelers' weary brows,
And lead them through the twilight lands
  Safely unto their Father's house?

So, we 'll not dream, nor look back, dear!
  But march right on, content and bold,
To where our life sets, heavenly clear,
  Westward, behind the hills of gold.

THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY.

"Where is the unknown country?"
  I whispered sad and slow—
"The strange and awful country
  To which I soon must go, must go,
  To which I soon must go?"

Out of the unknown country
  A voice sang soft and low:
"O pleasant is that country
  And sweet it is to go, to go,
  And sweet it is to go.

"Along the shining country
  The peaceful rivers flow:
And in that wondrous country
  The tree of life does grow, does grow,
  The tree of life does grow."

Ah, then into that country
  Of which I nothing know,
The everlasting country,
  With willing heart I go, I go,
  With willing heart I go.

Digitized by Google

WALTER THORNBURY.

George Walter Thornbury was born in London in 1828. His first publication was a series of antiquarian papers in the "Bristol Journal" in 1845. His first volume of poems was "Lays and Legends, or Ballads of the New World," 1851, which has been followed at intervals by several others. In 1876 he issued a volume containing all of his poems that he cared to preserve, under the title of "Historical and Legendary Ballads and Songs," with superb illustrations. His other publications include "Shakespeare's England," 1856; "British Artists from Hogarth to Turner," 1860; a "Life of J. M. W. Turner, R. A.," 1861; "Two Centuries of Song," a collection of *vers de société*, 1867; several volumes of travels, four or five novels, and two volumes of short stories. His name George was dropped in 1858. He died June 11, 1876.

THE DEATH OF KING WARWOLF.

The great King Warwolf waxing old,
  And feeling that death was nigh at hand,
Resolved to die as a hero should—
  Not pent in a bed, and then hid in the sand;
So he clad him brave in his golden mail,
  And took his axe and his massiest shield,
And his spear, and his bow, and his two-edged sword,
  That no one else but himself could wield.

And he bade them drag his galley forth,
  And load it with trunks of the driest pine,
And store it with oak-butts knotty and ringed,
  And fill it with fir-cones line on line.
So they set the gold-cloth sails all fair,
  And tied the well-worn helm due north,
And they bare him down on their brazen shields
  To the barque that was destined to bear him forth.

Sitting erect on his fir-tree throne,
  In his royal robe and glittering crown,
As the fateful galley bore away,
  Slowly out of sight of town,
Singing to Odin hymns of praise—
  Cheerily, though with a failing breath,
He went in splendor and bold of heart,
  In a kingly way to meet King Death.

They watched till they saw the ship go down
  Below the long gray line of sea;
And then there arose a great red glare,
  That seemed to crimson so fitfully
The whole broad heaven, and melt the waves
  Into one caldron of blood-red light,
And soon all suddenly there fell
  A pitchy gloom, and then came night.

THE NORSEMAN'S SERF.

"Sing me a song that will make me young,"
  Cried the Dane to the captive boy,
"A song that will stir my blood like wine."
  So he sung of peace and joy;
But every Dane, with a frown of scorn,
Clashed on his target and blew his horn.

Then, to soothe those hard and wolfish hearts,
  He sang them a lullaby,
A rocking tune that mothers croon
  To the children upon their knee;
Still they would not listen, the thievish horde,
But beat their knives on the oaken board.

"We want a song of youth and love."
  Then he struck his harp with might,
And sang of the eyes that had shot their fire
  Into his breast that night:
Till the old king kissed the ring he wore,
And cried, "My kingdom for her once more!"

They said, "Chant now of the Saxon shore."
  So he sang of those long, white walls,
Where the broad surf seethes and the breakers leap,
  And the galley rises and falls;
Then they roared, "Launch out!" and their axes rose
And beat together the wild tune's close.

"Give us a seaman's stave," cried they.
  So he sang of the steady gale,
That fills with a full and constant breath
  The straining galley's sail,
And drives, come daylight or come dark,
To the Saxon shore the Danish bark.

And he told of the green surge under the cliffs,
  And the white Wave spitting foam
O'er the jagged snout of the "Shark-tooth" reef,
  Not a mile from his Cornish home.

Digitized by Google

Then every Viking cried, "To sea!"
Hearing that song of pride and glee.

"Give us a battle-cry!" they shout.
And he blew them a trumpet-blast,
Like the shrill night shriek from a burning town,
That makes the wolf aghast.
Then they cried, "Away!" and the galleys sprang
To the waves' embrace as the captive sang.

THE DYING VIKING.

"Bring me my armor, Sigurd,
I'll die as my fathers died,
Not like a wolf in a shepherd's trap,
But in all a warrior's pride.
Strike on the brazen targets,
And let our clarions ring;
I'll meet this death they talk of,
As a king should meet a king.

"Olaf, take you my vessels
With the dark and threatening sails,
Go forth and scare the Saxon,
Harry his fertile vales;
Dye helm and hauberk crimson,
Ply well the sword and torch;
Go, brain the Murcian bishops
In their shattered temple-porch.

"And thou, my bowman, Harold,
Be thine to plunder France;
Smite with the axe and hammer
As the vine-grower's lance.
Sack churches, fire the homesteads,
Turn red the muddy Seine;
Burn standing corn and orchard,
Make barren every plain.

"Ye are my raven-feeders,
Ye are my warrior-brood,
Be yours to give the falcons
The cravens for their food.
But, Oscar, thou my youngest,
Thou hast thy mother's face,
Be thine to guard the peasants,
And found a peaceful race.

"Thou shalt bring home some maiden,
With eyes like violet flowers
When they spring up sweeter, fresher,
After the sunny showers.
You 'll let the pine-woods dwindle
Around our fortress hill,
And corn in golden billows
Gird many a freeman's will.

"But quick, my heart beats slower,
Life's sand is running fast;
Out with a thousand galleys—
I hear the quickening blast—
One hour, and in Luffoden
Our walrus-horns shall ring,
For I 'll meet this death they talk of,
As a king should meet a king."

FACES IN THE FIRE.

I sit and brood beside my fire,
Watching the red coals change their shape:
Through moving flames rise gates and towers,
Black eyeballs stare and hot mouths gape;
While dreaming I spin rhyme on rhyme
Of dew-fall and the summer-time.

The red flames stir like dragon-stings,
Or devil's arrows barbed with red;
I stab the fire's heart—hot the rain
That falls from veins that branch and spread;
And then I doze, or spin a rhyme
Of dew-fall and green summer-time.

So pass my midnights: shadows dance
Upon the wainscot silently;
They shape the future—bow and point—
I let the sable creatures be;
And careless sit and spin my rhyme
Of dew-fall and the summer-time.

Sometimes from dark nooks in the room
Glides forth my oldest skeleton—
Comes silent and sits by the fire,
His hands upon his knees of bone;
While shuddering still I weave my rhyme
Of dew-fall and hot summer-time.

I and that dreadful friend of mine
Sit staring at the crimson fire:
Whate'er I do, he moveth not,
Watching the midnight's funeral pyre
As through long, lonely hours I rhyme
Of dew-fall and sweet summer-time.

UNDER THE CLIFFS.

The sails, now white as a swan's breast,
Turned in a moment golden,
The red-brown canvas fluttering out,
Was presently all folden.
The tide came rolling to our feet
With spreading frills of snow,
As on the sand so brown and soft
We sat, amid the glow.

The breakers rolled in ten abreast,
Charging in stormy anger:
But one soft voice close to my ear
O'erpowered their raging clangor.
The boats might pass, the boats might tack,
Coquetting with the land;
I heed but that one soft voice,
And the clasp of that wee hand.

True! all the hour-glass sands that Time
Had spilt, lay there around us,
Yet still forgetful of day's flight
The mystic twilight found us.
As the large moon a smouldering globe
Of orange fire rose slow,
And home we wandered to the town,
Love's ebb had turned to flow.

Digitized by Google

GERALD MASSEY.

GERALD MASSEY was born near Tring, Hertfordshire, England, May 29, 1828. His father was a canal-boatman, and could not write his own name. His mother was naturally a superior woman, but as illiterate as her husband. At the age of eight Gerald was sent to work in a silk-mill, where the hours of labor were from five in the morning till half-past six in the evening; and his weekly earnings were from eighteen to twenty-eight cents! After a time the mill was burned down, and then he went to work at straw-plaiting. He had learned to read at a penny school, and had access to the Bible and "Pilgrim's Progress," to which were subsequently added "Robinson Crusoe" and a bundle of Wesleyan tracts. At the age of fifteen he went to London as an errand-boy. There he became at once a voracious reader, and at length fell in love, when for the first time he took to writing poetry. He says, "The first verses I ever made were upon hope, when I was utterly hopeless; and after I had begun, I never ceased for about four years, at the end of which time I rushed into print."

His effusions appeared in a provincial newspaper, and were gathered into a shilling volume entitled "Poems and Chansons," published at Tring, of which two hundred and fifty copies were sold. The French Revolution of 1848 had a powerful effect upon his mind, and in 1849, in company with several other working-men, he started the "Spirit of Freedom," an ultra-radical weekly, and was its editor. His editorial work was done at night, after the hours of his regular occupation were over; and it is said to have cost him five situations in less than a year. He became a co-laborer with Kingsley and Maurice in their plans for coöperative associations among the laboring classes. About the same time his poems in London journals and magazines began to attract attention. In 1853 he received a pension, and Lord Brownlow has given him a pretty cottage in his native county, where he now resides.

Massey has published in book form: "The Ballad of Babe Christabel, and other Poems," 1853; "Craigcrook Castle," 1856; "Robert Burns, and other Lyrics," 1859; "Voices of Freedom and Lyrics of Love," 1859; "Havelock's March, and other Poems," 1861; "Shakespeare's Sonnets never before Interpreted," 1866; and "A Tale of Eternity, and other Poems," 1870. His poems are republished in Boston in one volume. In 1873–'74 he made a lecturing tour in the United States, his most interesting theme being Spiritualism, in which he is a firm believer, and of which he presents a more attractive and poetical exposition than any other of its celebrated disciples.

THE BALLAD OF BABE CHRISTABEL.

WHEN Danaë-Earth bares all her charms,
And gives the god her perfect flower,
Who, in the sunshine's golden shower,
Leaps warm into her amorous arms!

And all the kindled greenery glows,
While from her emeraldine sea
Spring rises up rejoicingly,
And life hath richest overflows:

When young maids feel love stir i' the blood,
And wanton with the kissing leaves
And branches, and the quick sap heaves,
And dances to a ripened flood;

Till, blown to its hidden heart with sighs,
Love's red rose burns in cheeks so dear,
And, as sea-jewels upward peer,
Love-thoughts melt through their swimming eyes:

When Beauty walks in bravest dress,
And, fed with April's mellow showers,
The Earth laughs out with sweet May-flowers
That flush for very happiness:

And Spider-Puck his wonder weaves
O' nights, and nooks of greening gloom
Are rich with violets that bloom
In the cool dark of dewy leaves:

When rose-buds drink the fiery wine
Of dawn, with crimson stains i' the mouth,
All thirstily as yearning Youth
From Love's hand drinks the draught divine;

And honeyed plots are drowsed with bees;
And larks rain music by the shower,
While singing, singing hour by hour,
Song like a spirit sits i' the trees!

When fainting hearts forget their fears,
And in the poorest life's salt-cup
Some rare wine runs, and Hope builds up
Her rainbow over Memory's tears!

Digitized by Google

It fell upon a merry May-morn,
I' the perfect prime of that sweet time
When daisies whiten, woodbines climb—
The dear Babe Christabel was born.

ALL night the stars bright watches kept,
Like gods that look a golden calm;
The silence dropped its precious balm,
And the tired world serenely slept.

The birds were darkling in the nest,
Or bosomed in voluptuous trees:
On beds of flowers the happy breeze
Had kissed its fill and sank to rest.

All night beneath the cottage-eaves,
A lonely light, with tremulous arc,
Surged back a space the sea of dark,
And glanced among the glimmering leaves.

Without! the quiet heavens above
The nest of life, did lean and brood!
Within! the mother's tears of blood
Wet the Gethsemane of her love!

And when the morn with frolic zest,
Looked through the curtains of the night,
There was a dearer dawn of light,
A tenderer life the mother's prest!

Ah! bliss to make the brain reel wild!
The star new-kindled in the dark—
Life that had fluttered like a lark—
Lay in her bosom a sweet child!

How she had felt it drawing down
Her nesting heart more close and close—
Her rose-bud ripening to a rose,
That she should one day see full-blown!

How she had throbbed with hopes and fears,
And strained her inner eyes till dim,
To see the coming glory swim
Through the rich mist of happy tears;

For it, her woman's heart drank up,
And smiled at, sorrow's darkest dole:
And now delight's most dainty soul
Was crushed for her in one rich cup!

And then delicious languors crept,
Like nectar, on her pain's hot drouth,
And feeling fingers—kissing mouth—
Being faint with joy, the mother slept.

BABE Christabel was royally born!
For when the earth was flushed with flowers,
And drenched with beauty in sun-showers,
She came through golden gates of morn.

No chamber arras-pictured round,
Where sunbeams make a gorgeous gloom,
And touch its glories into bloom,
And footsteps fall withouten sound,
Was her birthplace that merry May-morn;
No gifts were heaped, no bells were rung,
No healths were drunk, no songs were sung
When dear Babe Christabel was born;

But Nature on the darling smiled,
And with her beauty's blessing crowned;
Love brooded o'er the hallowed ground,
And there were angels with the child!

And May her kisses of love did blow
On amorous airs, that came to her
With gifts of frankincense and myrrh,
As came the Magi long ago

To worship Bethlehem's baby-King:
Spring-birds made welcoming merriment,
And all the flowers for welcome sent
The secret sweetness of the Spring.

In glancing light and shimmering shade,
With cheeks that touched and ripelier burned,
May-roses in at the lattice yearned
A-tiptoe, and good-morrow bade.

No purple and fine linen might
Be hoarded up for her sweet sake:
But mother's love shall clothe and make
The little wearer bravely dight!

And worlds of worship are their eyes,
Their loyal hearts are worlds of love,
Who fondly clasp the stranger dove,
And read its news from Paradise.

Their looks praise God—souls sing for glee;
They think if this old world had toiled
Through ages to bring forth their child,
It hath a glorious destiny.

O HAPPY husband! happy wife!
The rarest blessing Heaven drops down,
The sweetest blossom in Spring's crown,
Starts in the furrows of your life!

God! what a towering height ye win,
Who cry, "Lo my beloved child!"
And, life on life sublimely piled,
Ye touch the heavens and peer within!

Look how a star of glory swims
Down aching silences of space,
Flushing the darkness till its face
With beating heart of light o'erbrims!

So brightening came Babe Christabel,
To touch the earth with fresh romance,
And light a mother's countenance
With looking on her miracle.

With hands so flower-like, soft, and fair,
She caught at life, with words as sweet
As first spring violets, and feet
As faëry-light as feet of air.

The father, down in Toil's mirk mine,
Turns to his wealthy world above,
Its radiance, and its home of love;
And lights his life like sun-struck wine.

Digitized by Google

The mother moves with queenlier tread:
Proud swell the globes of ripe delight
Above her heart, so warm and white
A pillow for the baby-head!

Their natures deepen, well-like, clear,
Till God's eternal stars are seen,
Forever shining and serene,
By eyes anointed Beauty's seer.

A sense of glory all things took—
The red rose-heart of dawn would blow,
And sundown's sumptuous pictures show
Babe-cherubs wearing their babe's look!

And round their peerless one they clung,
Like bees about a flower's wine-cup;
New thoughts and feelings blossomed up,
And hearts for very fulness sung

Of what their budding babe should grow,
When the maid crimsoned into wife,
And crowned the summit of some life,
Like phosphor, with morn on its brow!

And they should bless her for a bride,
Who, like a splendid saint alit
In some heart's seventh heaven, should sit,
As now in theirs, all glorified!

But oh! 't was all too white a brow
To flush with passion that doth fire
With Hymen's torch its own death-pyre—
So pure her heart was beating now!

And thus they built their castles brave
In faëry lands of gorgeous cloud;
They never saw a little white shroud,
Nor guessed how flowers may mask the grave.

She grew, a sweet and sinless child,
In shine and shower—calm and strife;
A rainbow on our dark of life,
From Love's own radiant heaven down-smiled!

In lonely loveliness she grew—
A shape all music, light, and love,
With startling looks, so eloquent of
The spirit burning into view.

At childhood she could seldom play
With merry heart, whose flashes rise
Like splendor-wingèd butterflies
From honeyed hearts of flowers in May:

The fields in blossom flamed and flushed,
The roses into crimson yearned,
With cloudy fire the wall-flowers burned,
And blood-red sunsets bloomed and blushed—

And still her cheek was pale as pearl—
It took no tint of Summer's wealth
Of color, warmth, and wine of health—
Death's hand so whitely pressed the girl!

No blush grew ripe to sun or kiss
Where violet-veins ran purple light,
So tenderly through Parian white,
Touching you into tenderness.

A spirit-look was in her face,
That shadowed a miraculous range
Of meanings, ever rich and strange,
Or lightened glory in the place.

Such mystic lore was in her eyes,
And light of other worlds than ours,
She looked as she had gathered flowers,
With little maids of Paradise.

Her brow—fit home for daintiest dreams—
With such a dawn of light was crowned,
And reeling ringlets showered round,
Like sunny sheaves of golden beams:

And she would talk so weirdly-wild,
And grow upon your wonderings,
As though her stature rose on wings!
And you forgot she was a child.

Ah! she was one of those who come
With pledgèd promise not to stay
Long, ere the angels let them stray
To nestle down in earthly home:

And, through the windows of her eyes,
We often saw her saintly soul,
Serene, and sad, and beautiful,
Go sorrowing for lost Paradise.

Our lamb in mystic meadows played:
In some celestial sleep she walked
Her dream of life, and low we talked,
As of her waking heart-afraid.

In earth she took no lusty root,
Her beauty of promise to disclose,
And round into the woman-rose,
And climb into life's crowning fruit.

She came—like music in the night
Floating as heaven in the brain,
A moment oped, and shut again,
And all is dark where all was light.

She came—as comes the light of smiles
O'er earth, and every budding thing
Makes quick with beauty—alive with Spring;
Then goeth to Hesperian Isles.

Midnight was trancèd solemnly
Thinking of dawn: her star-thoughts burned!
The trees like burdened prophets yearned,
Rapt in a wind of prophecy:

When, like the night, the shadow of woe
On all things laid its hand death-dark,
Our last hope went out as a spark,
And a cry smote heaven like a blow!

We sat and watched by life's dark stream,
Our love-lamp blown about the night,
With hearts that lived as lived its light,
And died as died its precious gleam.

Digitized by Google

In Death's face hers flashed up and smiled,
As smile the young flowers in their prime,
In the face of their gray murderer Time,
And Death for true-love kissed our child.

She thought our good-night kiss was given,
And like a lily her life did close;
Angels uncurtained that repose,
And the next waking dawned in heaven.

With her white hands clasped she sleepeth; heart is hushed, and lips are cold;
Death shrouds up her heaven of beauty, and a weary way I go,
Like the sheep without a shepherd on the wintry norland wold,
With the face of day shut out by blinding snow.

O'er its widowed nest my heart sits moaning for its youngling fled
From this world of wail and weeping, gone to join her starry peers;
And my light of life 's o'ershadowed where the dear one lieth dead,
And I 'm crying in the dark with many fears.

All last night-tide she seemed near me, like a lost belovèd bird,
Beating at the lattice louder than the sobbing wind and rain;
And I called across the night with tender name and fondling word;
And I yearned out through the darkness, all in vain.

Heart will plead, "Eyes cannot see her: they are blind with tears of pain;"
And it climbeth up and straineth for dear life to look and hark
While I call her once again: but there cometh no refrain,
And it droppeth down, and dieth in the dark.

In this dim world of clouding cares,
We rarely know, till wildered eyes
See white wings lessening up the skies,
The angels with us unawares.

And thou hast stolen a jewel, Death!
Shall light thy dark up like a star,
A beacon kindling from afar
Our light of love, and fainting faith.

Through tears it streams perpetually,
And glitters through the thickest glooms,
Till the eternal morning comes
To light us o'er the jasper sea.

With our best branch in tenderest leaf,
We 've strewn the way our Lord doth come;
And, ready for the harvest-home,
His reapers bind our ripest sheaf.

Our beautiful Bird of light hath fled
Awhile she sat with folded wings—
Sang round us a few hoverings—
Then straightway into glory sped.

With sense of motherhood new-found
The white-winged angels nurture her,
High on the heavenly hills of myrrh,
And all Love's purple glory round.

Through childhood's morning-land, serene
She walked betwixt us twain, like Love;
While, in a robe of light above,
Her better angel walked unseen,

Till life's highway broke bleak and wild;
Then, lest her starry garments trail
In mire, heart bleed, and courage fail,
The angel's arms caught up the child.

Her wave of life hath backward rolled
To the great ocean; on whose shore
We wander up and down, to store
Some treasures of the times of old:

And aye we seek and hunger on
For precious pearls and relics rare,
Strewn on the sands for us to wear
At heart, for love of her that 's gone.

Oh, weep no more! there yet is balm
In Gilead! Love doth ever shed
Rich healing where it nestles—spread
O'er desert pillows, some green palm!

Strange glory streams through life's wild rents,
And through the open door of Death
We see the Heaven that beckoneth
To the belovèd going hence.

God's ichor fills the hearts that bleed;
The best fruit loads the broken bough;
And in the wounds our sufferings plough,
Immortal Love sows sovereign seed.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

High hopes that burned like stars sublime,
Go down i' the heavens of freedom;
And true hearts perish in the time
We bitterliest need 'em!
But never sit we down and say
There 's nothing left but sorrow:
We walk the Wilderness to-day,
The Promised Land to-morrow.

Our birds of song are silent now,
There are no flowers blooming!
Yet life is in the frozen bough,
And freedom's spring is coming!
And freedom's tide comes up alway,
Though we may strand in sorrow:
And our good bark, a-ground to-day,
Shall float again to-morrow.

Through all the long, dark night of years
The people's cry ascendeth,
And earth is wet with blood and tears:
But our meek sufferance endeth!
The few shall not forever sway,
The many moil in sorrow:
The powers of hell are strong to-day,
But Christ shall rise to-morrow.

Digitized by Google

Though hearts brood o'er the past, our eyes
With smiling futures glisten!
For, lo! our day bursts up the skies:
Lean out your souls and listen!
The world rolls freedom's radiant way,
And ripens with her sorrow:
Keep heart! who bear the cross to-day,
Shall wear the crown to-morrow.

O Youth! flame-earnest, still aspire,
With energies immortal!
To many a heaven of desire,
Our yearning opes a portal!
And though age wearies by the way,
And hearts break in the furrow,
We 'll sow the golden grain to-day—
The harvest comes to-morrow.

Build up heroic lives, and all
Be like a sheathen sabre,
Ready to flash out at God's call,
O Chivalry of Labor!
Triumph and Toil are twins: and aye
Joy suns the cloud of sorrow;
And 't is the martyrdom to-day,
Brings victory to-morrow.

THE CHIVALRY OF LABOR.

Uprouse ye now, brave brother-band,
With honest heart, and working hand:
We are but few, toil-tried, and true,
Yet hearts beat high to dare and do:
And who would not a champion be
In Labor's lordlier Chivalry?

We fight! but bear no bloody brand,
We fight to free our Fatherland:
We fight that smiles of love may glow
On lips where curses quiver now!
Hurrah! hurrah! true knights are we
In Labor's lordlier Chivalry.

Oh! there be hearts that ache to see
The day-dawn of our victory:
Eyes full of heart-break with us plead,
And watchers weep, and martyrs bleed:
Oh! who would not a champion be
In Labor's lordlier Chivalry?

Work, brothers mine; work, hand and brain;
We 'll win the golden age again:
And Love's millennial morn shall rise
In happy hearts and blessed eyes.
Hurrah! hurrah! true knights are we
In Labor's lordlier Chivalry.

O LAY THY HAND IN MINE, DEAR!

O lay thy hand in mine, dear!
We 're growing old, we 're growing old;
But Time hath brought no sign, dear,
That hearts grow cold, that hearts grow cold.
'T is long, long since our new love
Made life divine, made life divine;
But age enricheth true love,
Like noble wine, like noble wine.

And lay thy cheek to mine, dear,
And take thy rest, and take thy rest;
Mine arms around thee twine, dear,
And make thy nest, and make thy nest.
A many cares are pressing
On this dear head, on this dear head;
But Sorrow's hands in blessing
Are surely laid, are surely laid.

O lean thy life on mine, dear!
'T will shelter thee, 't will shelter thee.
Thou wert a winsome vine, dear,
On my young tree, on my young tree:
And so, till boughs are leafless,
And song-birds flown, and song-birds flown,
We 'll twine, then lay us, griefless,
Together down, together down.

MY LOVE.

My Love is true and tender,
Her eyes are rich with rest;
Her hair of dappled splendor,
The color I love best;
So sweet, so gay, so odorous warm,
She nestles here, heart-high,
A bounteous aspect, beauteous form,
But—just a wee bit sly.

My Love is no light dreamer,
A-floating with the foam;
But a brave life-sea swimmer,
With footing found in home.
My winsome wife, she 's bright without,
And beautiful within;
But—I would not say quite without
The least wee touch of sin.

My Love is not an angel
In one or two small things;
But just a wifely woman
With other wants than wings.
You have some little leaven
Of earth, you darling dear!
If you were fit for heaven,
You might not nestle here.

SONG.

Like leaves from Autumn's bough, Old Friend,
Our ripest hopes depart;
There 's little left us now, Old Friend,
To cheer the patriot's heart.
The altars where we knelt, Old Friend,
Grow desolate and cold,
And faint is the faith we felt, Old Friend,
I' the valiant days of old.

In bloody shrouds they sleep, Old Friend,
Who could not live as slaves:
The living only weep, Old Friend,
Above their martyrs' graves!
Freedom hath many a wound, Old Friend,
And, ringed by hounds of hell,
She wraps her purple round, Old Friend,
To fall as Cæsar fell.

Digitized by Google

The men of blood prevail, Old Friend,
And, stricken in the night,
The people's weeping wail, Old Friend,
Goes praying for the light.
And yet their day shall come, Old Friend,
Though we may never hear
The shouts of harvest-home, Old Friend,
Nor see the golden year.

FOR CHRISTIE'S SAKE.

Upon us falls the shadow of night,
And darkened is our day!
My love will greet the morning light
Four hundred miles away.
God love her! torn so swift and far
From hearts so like to break!
And God love all who are good to her;
For Christie's sake.

I know whatever spot of ground
In any land we tread—
I know the eternal arms are round;
That heaven is overhead;
And faith the mourning heart will heal,
But many fears will make
Our spirits faint, our fond hearts kneel,
For Christie's sake.

Good-by, dear! be they kind to you
As though you were their ain!
My Daisy opens to the dew,
But shuts against the rain!
Never will new moon glad our eyes
But offerings we shall make
To old God wish! and prayers will rise
For Christie's sake.

Four years ago we struck our tent;
O'er homeless babes we yearned;
Our all—three darlings—with us went,
But only two returned!
While life yet bleeds into her grave,
Love ventures one more stake;
Hush, hush, poor hearts! if big, be brave,
For Christie's sake.

Like crown to most ambitious brows
Was Christie to us given;
To make our home a holy house,
And nursery of heaven!
Oh, softer was her bed of rest,
Than lily's on the lake;
Peace filled so deep each billowy breast,
For Christie's sake.

To music played by harps and hands
Invisible, were we drawn
O'er charmèd seas, through faëry lands,
Under a dearer dawn!
We entered our new world of love
With blessings in our wake,
While prospering heavens smiled above
For Christie's sake.

We gazed with proud eyes luminous
On such a gift of grace—
All Heaven narrowed down to us
In one dear little face!
And many a pang we felt, dear wife,
With hurt of heart and ache,
All shut within like clasping knife,
For Christie's sake.

I would no tears might e'er run down
Her patient face, beside
Such happy pearls of heart as crown
Young mother—new-made bride!
For 't is a face that, looking up
To passing Heaven, might make
An angel stop, a blessing drop,
For Christie's sake.

If Love in that child's heart of hers
Should breathe and break its calm,
With trouble sweet as that which stirs
The brooding buds of balm—
Listening at ear of peeping pearl
Glistening in eyes that shake
Their sweet dew down! God bless our girl,
For Christie's sake.

But, Father! if our babe must mourn,
Be merciful and kind;
And if our gentle lamb be shorn,
Attemper thou the wind!
Across the deluge guide our dove,
And to thy bosom take
With arm of love, and shield above,
For Christie's sake.

We have had sorrows many and strange.
Poor Christie! when I'm gone,
Some of my words will weirdly change
If she read sadly on!
Lightnings, from what was dark of old,
With meanings strange will break
Of sorrows hid or dimly told
For Christie's sake.

Wife! we should still try hard to win
The best for our dear child;
And keep a resting-place within,
When all without grows wild.
As on the winter graves the snow
Falls softly flake by flake,
Our love should whitely clothe our woe,
For Christie's sake.

For one will wake at midnight drear
From out a dream of death,
And find no dear head pillowed near;
No sound of peaceful breath!
May no weak wailing words arise,
No bitter thoughts awake
To see the tears in Memory's eyes:
For Christie's sake.

And *there!* where many crownless kings
Of earth a crown shall wear—
The martyrs who have borne the pangs
Their palm at last shall bear.
When, with our lily pure of sin
Our heavenward way we take—
There, may we walk with welcome in;
For Christie's sake.

Digitized by Google

OUR WHITE DOVE.

A WHITE DOVE out of heaven flew,
  White as the whitest shape of grace
  That nestles in the soft embrace
Of heaven when skies are summer-blue;

It came with dew-drop purity,
  On glad wings of the morning light,
  And sank into our life, so white
A VISION! sweetly, secretly!

Silently nestled our WHITE DOVE:
  Balmily made our bosoms swim
  With still delight, and overbrim;
The air it breathed was breath of love:

Our Dove had eyes of baby-blue,
  Soft as the speedwell's by the way,
  That looketh up as it would say,
"Who kissed me while I slept, did you?"

God love it! but we took our bird,
  And loved it well, and merry made;
  We sang and danced around, or prayed
In silence, wherein hearts are heard.

It seemed to come from far green fields
  To meet us over life's rough sea,
  With leaf of promise from the tree
In which a dearer nest it builds.

As fondling mother birds will pull
  The softest feathers from their breast,
  We gave our best to line the nest
And make it warm and beautiful!

We held it as the leaves of life
  In hidden silent service fold
  About a rose's heart of gold,
So jealous of all outer strife!

When holy sleep in soothing palms
  Pillowed the darling little head,
  How lightly moved we round the bed,
And felt the silence fall in balms!

But all we did or tried to do,
  Our flood of joy it never felt;
  Only into our hearts would melt
Still deeper those dove-eyes of blue.

Quick with the spirit of field and wood,
  All other birds would sing and sing
  Till hearts did ripple and homes did ring:
Our white Dove only cooed and cooed—

With every day some sweetness new,
  And night and day and day and night
  It was the voice of our delight,
That gentle, low, endearing coo!

God! if we were to lose our child!
  Oh, we must die, poor hearts would cry:
  She looked on us so hushingly;
So mournfully to herself she smiled.

One day she pined up in our face
  With a low cry we could not still,
  A moaning we could never heal,
For sleep in some more quiet place.

We could not help and yet must see
  The little head droop wearily,
  The little eyes shine eerily,
My Dove! what have they done to thee?

The look grew pleading in her eyes,
  And mournful as the lonesome light
  That in a window burns all night,
Asking for stillness, while one dies.

The hand of Death so coldly clings,
  So strongly draws the weak life-wave
  Into his dark, vast, silent cave:
Our little Dove must use its wings!

And so it sought the dearer nest;
  A little way across the sea
  It kept us winged company,
Then sank into its leafier rest.

And left us long ago to feel
  A sadness in the sweetest words,
  A broken heartstring mid the chords
A tone more tremulous when we kneel

But, dear my Christie, do not cry,
  Our white Dove left for you and me
  Such blessed promise as must be
Perfected in the heavens high.

The stars that shone in her dear eyes
  May be a little while withdrawn
  To rise and lead the eternal dawn
For us, up heaven in other skies.

Our bird of God but soars and sings:
  Oft when life's heaving wave 's at rest,
  She makes her mirror in my breast,
I feel a winnowing of wings.

And meekly doth she minister
  Glad thoughts of comfort, thrills of pride;
  She makes me feel that if I died
This moment I should go to her.

Be good! and you shall find her where
  No wind can shake the wee bird's nest;
  No dreams can break the wee bird's rest;
No night, no pain, no parting there!

No echoes of old storms gone by!
  Earth's sorrows slumber peacefully;
  The weary are at rest, and He
Shall wipe the tears from every eye.

OUR LITTLE CHILD WITH RADIANT EYES.

WITH seeking hearts we still grope on,
  Where dropped our jewel in the dust:
The looking crowd have long since gone,
  And still we seek with lonely trust:
  O little child with radiant eyes!

In all our heart-ache we are drawn,
  Unweeting, to your little grave;
There, on your heavenly shores of dawn,
  Breaks gentlier sorrow's sobbing wave:
  O little child with radiant eyes!

Digitized by Google

Dark underneath the brightening sod,
The sweetest life of all our years
Is crowded in ae gift to God.
Outside the gate we stand in tears!
O little child with radiant eyes!

Heart-empty as the acorn-cup
That only fills with wintry showers,
The breaking cloud but brimmeth up
With tears this pleading life of ours:
O little child with radiant eyes!

We think of you, our angel kith,
Till life grows light with starry leaven:
We never forget you, darling with
The gold hair waving high in heaven!
Our little child with radiant eyes!

Your white wings grown you will conquer death!
You are coming through our dreams even now,
With azure peep of heaven beneath
The arching glory of your brow,
Our little child with radiant eyes!

We cannot pierce the dark, but oft
You see us with looks of pitying balm;
A hint of heaven—a touch more soft
Than kisses—all the trouble is calm:
Our little child with radiant eyes!

Think of us wearied in the strife,
And when we sit by sorrow's streams,
Shake down upon our drooping life
The dew that brings immortal dreams:
Our little child with radiant eyes!

DESOLATE.

The day goes down red darkling,
The moaning waves dash out the light,
And there is not a star of hope sparkling
On the threshold of my night.

Wild winds of Autumn go wailing
Up the valley and over the hill,
Like yearning ghosts round the world sailing,
In search of the old love still.

A fathomless sea is rolling
O'er the wreck of the bravest bark;
And my pain-muffled heart is tolling
Its dumb-peal down in the dark.

The waves of a mighty sorrow
Have whelmèd the pearl of my life:
And there cometh to me no morrow
Shall solace this desolate strife.

Gone are the last faint flashes,
Set in the sun of my years;
And over a few poor ashes
I sit in my darkness and tears.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

Hope on, hope ever! though to-day be dark,
The sweet sunburst may smile on thee to-morrow:
Though thou art lonely, there's an eye will mark
Thy loneliness, and guerdon all thy sorrow!
Though thou must toil 'mong cold and sordid men,
With none to echo back thy thought, or love thee,
Cheer up, poor heart! thou dost not beat in vain,
For God is over all, and heaven above thee—
Hope on, hope ever.

The iron may enter in and pierce thy soul,
But cannot kill the love within thee burning:
The tears of misery, thy bitter dole,
Can never quench thy true heart's seraph yearning
For better things: nor crush thy ardor's trust,
That error from the mind shall be uprooted,
That truths shall dawn as flowers spring from the dust,
And love be cherished where hate was imbruted—
Hope on, hope ever.

I know 't is hard to bear the sneer and taunt—
With the heart's honest pride at midnight wrestle,
To feel the killing canker-worm of want,
While rich rogues in their stolen luxury nestle;
For I have felt it. Yet from earth's cold real
My soul looks out on coming things, and cheerful
The warm sunrise floods all the land ideal,
And still it whispers to the worn and tearful,
Hope on, hope ever.

Hope on, hope ever! after darkest night,
Comes, full of loving life, the laughing morning;
Hope on, hope ever! Spring-tide, flushed with light,
Aye crowns old Winter with her rich adorning.
Hope on, hope ever! yet the time shall come,
When man to man shall be a friend and brother
And this old world shall be a happy home,
And all earth's family love one another!
Hope on, hope ever.

THE PEOPLE'S ADVENT.

'T is coming up the steep of Time,
And this old world is growing brighter!
We may not see its dawn sublime,
Yet high hopes make the heart throb lighter.
We may be sleeping in the ground,
When it awakes the world in wonder;
But we have felt it gathering round,
And heard its voice of living thunder.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Digitized by Google

'T is coming now, the glorious time,
Foretold by seers, and sung in story;
For which, when thinking was a crime,
Souls leaped to heaven from scaffolds gory!
They passed, nor see the work they wrought,
Now the crowned hopes of centuries blossom!
But the live lightning of their thought
And daring deeds, doth pulse earth's bosom.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Creeds, empires, systems, rot with age,
But the great people 's ever youthful!
And it shall write the future's page,
To our humanity more truthful!
The gnarliest heart hath tender chords,
To waken at the name of "Brother;"
And time comes when brain-scorpion words
We shall not speak to sting each other.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Out of the light, ye priests, nor fling
Your dark, cold shadows on us longer!
Aside! thou world-wide curse, called king!
The people's step is quicker, stronger.
There 's a divinity within
That makes men great, whene'er they will it.
God works with all who dare to win,
And the time cometh to reveal it.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Freedom! the tyrants kill thy braves,
Yet in our memories live the sleepers;
And, though doomed millions feed the graves,
Dug by Death's fierce, red-handed reapers,
The world shall not forever bow
To things which mock God's own endeavor;
'T is nearer than they wot of now,
When flowers shall wreathe the sword forever.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Fraternity! Love's other name!
Dear, heaven-connecting link of being!
Then shall we grasp thy golden dream,
As souls, full-statured, grow far-seeing.
Thou shalt unfold our better part,
And in our life-cup yield more honey;
Light up with joy the poor man's heart,
And love's own world with smiles more sunny.
'T is coming! yes, 't is coming!

Ay, it must come! The tyrant's throne
Is crumbling, with our hot tears rusted;
The sword earth's mighty have leaned on
Is cankered, with our heart's blood crusted.
Room! for the men of mind make way!
Ye robber rulers, pause no longer;
Ye cannot stay the opening day:
The world rolls on, the light grows stronger—
The people's advent 's coming!

THE MARTYRS' HILL.

Sitting in her sorrow lone,
Still our Mother makes her moan
For the Lost; and to the Martyrs' Hill our thoughts in mourning go.
O, that desert of the Dead,
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow!

Into glory had they rode
When the tide of triumph flowed,
Not a tear would be shed for the heroes lying low,
But our hearts break for the Dead,
In their desolate death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

Praying breath rose white in air,
Eyes were set in a stern stare,
Hands were stretched for help that came not as they sank in silence low:
Our grand, our gracious Dead,
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

Now the winter snows are gone,
And Earth smiles as though the Dawn
Had come up from it in Flowers—such a light of grace doth glow
All about our darkened Dead,
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

But, never, never more,
Comes the Spring that will restore
To their own love, their own land, the dear ones lying low
On the Martyrs' Hill, our Dead
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

Till with victory God replies,
Shall our Battle storm the skies,
And our living heroes think, as they grapple with the foe,
Of our perished, peerless Dead,
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

Through a hundred battles red,
Shall their fame float overhead:
Into everlasting flowers shall their martyr memories blow.
So we crown our glorious Dead,
Who lay down in their death-bed,
With their winding-sheet and wreath of winter snow.

Digitized by Google

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in London in 1828. He is the son of Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian poet, who died an exile in London in 1854. Dante studied at King's College, became an artist, and illustrated an edition of Tennyson's poems. He belongs to the pre-Raphaelite school of painters, and has exhibited "The Girlhood of the Virgin," 1849; three pieces in water-color, 1858; and "Fair Rosamond," 1860. His published writings are, "The Early Italian Poets," translations from Dante and his predecessors, 1861, of which a revised edition appeared in 1874 under the title of "Dante and his Circle;" and a volume of "Poems," 1870.

LOVE'S NOCTURN.

Master of the murmuring courts
  Where the shapes of sleep convene!
Lo! my spirit here exhorts
  All the powers of thy demesne
  For their aid to woo my queen.
        What reports
  Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
  Dreamland lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breathing shell.
  Ah! that from all dreams I might
  Choose one dream and guide its flight!
        I know well
  What her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:
  Some whose buoyance waits not sleep,
Deep within the August woods;
  Some that hum while rest may steep
  Weary labor laid a-heap;
        Interludes,
  Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poets' fancies all are there:
  There the elf-girls flood with wings
Valleys full of plaintive air;
  There breathe perfumes; there in rings
  Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;
        Siren there
  Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

Thence the one dream mutually
  Dreamed in bridal unison,
Less than waking ecstasy;
  Half-formed visions that make moan
  In the house of birth alone;
        And what we
  At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies
  In one gracious form's control,
Fair with honorable eyes,
  Lamps of an auspicious soul:
  Oh, their glance is loftiest dole,
        Sweet and wise,
  Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her my dreams are all
  Clammy trance that fears the sky:
Changing footpaths shift and fall;
  From polluted coverts nigh,
  Miserable phantoms sigh;
        Quakes the pall,
  And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said
  That, as echoes of man's speech
Far in secret clefts are made,
  So do all men's bodies reach
  Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,
        Shape or shade
  In those halls portrayed of each?

Ah! might I, by thy good grace
  Groping in the windy stair,
(Darkness and the breath of space
  Like loud waters everywhere),
  Meeting mine own image there
        Face to face,
  Send it from that place to her!

Nay, not I; but oh! do thou,
  Master, from thy shadow kind
Call my body's phantom now:
  Bid it bear its face declined
  Till its flight her slumbers find,
        And her brow
  Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring
  Trembles, with mute orison
Confidently strengthening,
  Water's voice and wind's as one

Digitized by Google

Shed an echo in the sun.
Soft as Spring,
Master, bid it sing and moan.

Song shall tell how glad and strong
Is the night she soothes alway;
Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue
Of the brazen hours of day:
Sounds as of the springtide they,
Moan and song,
While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave
The world's fluent woes prefer—
Not the praise the world doth give,
Dulcet fulsome whisperer;
Let it yield my love to her,
And achieve
Strength that shall not grieve or err.

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,
Both at night-watch (let it say),
And where round the sun-dial
The reluctant hours of day,
Heartless, hopeless of their way,
Rest and call;
There her glance doth fall and stay.

Suddenly her face is there:
So do mounting vapors wreathe
Subtile-scented transports where
The black fir-wood sets its teeth.
Part the boughs and look beneath,
Lilies share
Secret waters there, and breathe.

Master, bid my shadow bend
Whispering thus till birth of light,
Lest new shapes that sleep may send
Scatter all its work to flight;
Master, master of the night,
Bid it spend
Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.

Yet, ah me! if at her head
There another phantom lean
Murmuring over the fragrant bed—
Ah! and if my spirit's queen
Smile those alien words between—
Ah! poor shade!
Shall it strive, or fade unseen?

How should love's own messenger
Strive with love and be love's foe?
Master, nay! If thus, in her,
Sleep a wedded heart should show,
Silent let mine image go,
Its old share
Of thy sunken air to know.

Like a vapor wan and mute,
Like a flame, so let it pass;
One low sigh across her lute,
One dull breath against her glass;
And to my sad soul, alas!
One salute
Cold as when death's foot shall pass.

Then, too, let all hopes of mine,
All vain hopes by night and day,
Slowly at thy summoning sign
Rise up pallid and obey.
Dreams, if this is thus, were they:
Be they thine,
And to dreamland pine away

Yet from old time, life, not death,
Master, in thy rule is rife:
Lo! through thee, with mingling breath,
Adam woke beside his wife.
O Love bring me so, for strife,
Force and faith,
Bring me so not death but life!

Yea, to Love himself is poured
This frail song of hope and fear.
Thou art Love, of one accord
With kind Sleep to bring her near,
Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah, how dear!
Master, Lord,
In her name implored, O hear!

THE PORTRAIT.

This is her picture as she was:
It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
Should tarry when myself had gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir—
Until mine eyes almost aver
That now, even now, the sweet lips part
To breathe the words of the sweet heart:
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray
That makes the prison-depths more rude—
The drip of water night and day
Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet this, of all love's perfect prize,
Remains; save what in mournful guise
Takes counsel with my soul alone—
Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all; a covert place
Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands
As in that wood that day: for so
Was the still movement of her hands,
And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
'T is she: though of herself, alas!
Less than her shadow on the grass,
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she—
One with the other all alone;
And we were blithe; yet memory
Saddens those hours, as when the moon

Digitized by Google

Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stooped to drink the spring-water,
  Athirst where other waters sprang;
  And where the echo is, she sang—
My soul another echo there.

But when that hour my soul won strength
  For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
  Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane;
  And there she hearkened what I said,
  With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
  Like leaves through which a bird has flown,
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;
  Till I must make them all my own,
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet long silences,
  She stood among the plants in bloom
  At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
  And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burden of my love
  It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
  In that one darkness lying still,
  What now to thee my love's great will,
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

For now doth daylight disavow
  Those days—naught left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
  At night-time these things reach mine ear,
When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
  Forest and water, far and wide,
  In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
  And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept:
  For unawares I came upon
Those glades where once she walked with me;
And as I stood there suddenly,
  All wan with traversing the night,
  Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
  The beating heart of Love's own breast—
Where round the secret of all spheres
  All angels lay their wings to rest—
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
  Throughout the music of the suns,
  It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God!

Here with her face doth Memory sit
  Meanwhile and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
  Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer:
While hopes and aims long lost with her
  Stand round her image side by side,
  Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

SISTER HELEN.

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
  Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
  Little brother."
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But if you have done your work aright,
  Sister Helen,
You 'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play to-night,
  Little brother."
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven!)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
  Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so—nay, peace! you cannot tell,
  Little brother."
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh, the waxen knave was plump to-day,
  Sister Helen;
How like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay, now, of the dead what can you say,
  Little brother?"
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?)

"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
  Sister Helen,
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!"
"Nay, now, when looked you yet on blood,
  Little brother?"
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Now close your eyes, for they 're sick and sore,
  Sister Helen,
And I 'll play without the gallery-door."
"Ay, let me rest—I 'll lie on the floor,
  Little brother."
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Here high up in the balcony,
  Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me."
"Ay, look and say whatever you see,
  Little brother."
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Outside it 's merry in the wind's wake,
  Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake."
"Hush! heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
  Little brother?"
  (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

Digitized by Google

"I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly."
"Little brother, whence come the three,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
Sister Helen,
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."
"Look, look, do you know them who they are,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the blast."
"The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He has made a sign and called Halloo!
Sister Helen,
And he says that he would speak with you."
"Oh, tell him I fear the frozen dew,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven!)

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,
Sister Helen,
That Keith of Ewern's like to die."
"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)

"For three days now, he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,
And he prays in torment to be dead."
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away."
"*My* prayer was heard—he need but pray,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can."
"Nay, then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he calls forever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame."

"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast."
"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen;
But his words are drowned in the wind's course."
"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
A word ill heard, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh, he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die."
"He sees me in earth, in moon and sky,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Earth, moon, and sky, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."
"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Oh, never more, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
No more again, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh, it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white hair on the blast."
"The short, short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven?)

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little Brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

Digitized by Google

"Oh, his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh, he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Nay, flame cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The way is long between Hell and Heaven!)

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh, the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But Keith of Ewern's sadder still,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!)

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Here for a space between Hell and Heaven!)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has crossed,
Sister Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

STRATTON WATER.

"O HAVE you seen the Stratton flood
That's great with rain to-day?
It runs beneath your wall, Lord Sands,
Full of the new-mown hay.

"I led your hounds to Hutton bank
To bathe at early morn:
They got their bath by Borrowbrake
Above the standing corn."

Out from the castle-stair Lord Sands
Looked up the western lea;
The rook was grieving on her nest,
The flood was round her tree.

Over the castle-wall Lord Sands
Looked down the eastern hill:
The stakes swam free among the boats,
The flood was rising still.

"What's yonder far below that lies
So white against the slope?"
"Oh, it's a sail o' your bonny barks
The waters have washed up."

"But I have never a sail so white,
And the water's not yet there."
"Oh, it's the swans o' your bonny lake
The rising flood doth scare."

"The swans they would not hold so still,
So high they would not win."
"Oh, it's Joyce my wife has spread her smock
And fears to fetch it in."

"Nay, knave, it's neither sail nor swans,
Nor aught that you can say;
For though your wife might leave her smock,
Herself she'd bring away."

Lord Sands has passed the turret-stair,
The court, and yard, and all;
The kine were in the byre that day,
The nags were in the stall.

Lord Sands has won the weltering slope
Whereon the white shape lay:
The clouds were still above the hill,
And the shape was still as they.

Oh, pleasant is the gaze of life
And sad is death's blind head;
But awful are the living eyes
In the face of one thought dead!

"In God's name, Janet, is it me
Thy ghost has come to seek?"
"Nay, wait another hour, Lord Sands—
Be sure my ghost shall speak."

A moment stood he as a stone,
Then grovelled to his knee.
"O Janet, O my love, my love,
Rise up and come with me!"
"Oh, once before you made me come,
And it's here you have brought me!

Digitized by Google

"Oh many 's the sweet word, Lord Sands,
You 've spoken oft to me;
But all that I have from you to-day
Is the rain on my body.

"And many 's the good gift, Lord Sands,
You 've promised oft to me;
But the gift of yours I keep to-day
Is the babe in my body.

"Oh it 's not in any earthly bed
That first my babe I 'll see;
For I have brought my body here
That the flood may cover me."

His face was close against her face,
His hands of hers were fain:
Oh her wet cheeks were hot with tears,
Her wet hands cold with rain.

"They told me you were dead, Janet—
How could I guess the lie?"
"They told me you were false, Lord Sands—
What could I do but die?"

"Now keep you well, my brother Giles—
Through you I deemed her dead!
As wan as your towers be to-day,
To-morrow they 'll be red.

"Look down, look down, my false mother,
That bade me not to grieve:
You 'll look up when our marriage-fires
Are lit to-morrow eve.

"Oh more than one and more than two
The sorrow of this shall see:
But it 's to-morrow, love, for them—
To-day 's for thee and me."

He 's drawn her face between his hands
And her pale mouth to his:
No bird that was so still that day
Chirps sweeter than his kiss.

The flood was creeping round their feet.
"O Janet, come away!
The hall is warm for the marriage-rite,
The bed for the birthday."

"Nay, but I hear your mother cry,
"Go bring this bride to bed!
And would she christen her babe unborn,
So wet she comes to wed?'

"I 'll be your wife to cross your door
And meet your mother's e'e.
We plighted troth to wed i' the kirk,
And it 's there I 'll wed with ye."

He 's ta'en her by the short girdle
And by the dripping sleeve:
"Go fetch Sir Jock, my mother's priest—
You 'll ask of him no leave.

"Oh it 's one half-hour to reach the kirk
And one for the marriage-rite;
And kirk and castle and castle-lands
Shall be our babe's to-night."

"The flood 's in the kirkyard, Lord Sands,
And round the belfry-stair."
"I bade ye fetch the priest," he said,
"Myself shall bring him there.

"It 's for the lilt of wedding-bells
We 'll have the hail to pour,
And for the clink of bridle-reins
The plashing of the oar."

Beneath them on the nether hill
A boat was floating wide:
Lord Sands swam out and caught the oars
And rowed to the hillside.

He 's wrapped her in a green mantle
And set her softly in;
Her hair was wet upon her face,
Her face was gray and thin;
And "Oh!" she said, "lie still, my babe,
It 's out you must not win!"

But woe 's my heart for Father John!
As hard as he might pray,
There seemed no help but Noah's ark
Or Jonah's fish that day.

The first strokes that the oars struck
Were over the broad leas;
The next strokes that the oars struck
They pushed beneath the trees;

The last stroke that the oars struck,
The good boat's head was met,
And there the gate of the kirkyard
Stood like a ferry-gate.

He 's set his hand upon the bar
And lightly leaped within:
He 's lifted her to his left shoulder,
Her knees beside his chin.

The graves lay deep beneath the flood
Under the rain alone;
And when the foot-stone made him slip,
He held by the head-stone.

The empty boat thrawed i' the wind,
Against the postern tied.
"Hold still, you 've brought my love with me,
You shall take back my bride."

But woe 's my heart for Father John
And the saints he clamored to!
There 's never a saint but Christopher
Might hale such buttocks through!

And "Oh!" she said, "on men's shoulders
I well had thought to wend,
And well to travel with a priest,
But not to have cared or ken'd.

"And oh!" she said, "it 's well this way
That I thought to have fared—
Not to have lighted at the kirk
But stopped in the kirkyard.

"For it 's oh and oh I prayed to God,
Whose rest I hoped to win,

Digitized by Google

That when to-night at your board-head
  You 'd bid the feast begin,
This water past your window-sill
  Might bear my body in."

Now make the white bed warm and soft
  And greet the merry morn.
The night the mother should have died
  The young son shall be born.

THE STREAM'S SECRET.

What thing unto mine ear
  Wouldst thou convey—what secret thing,
O wandering water ever whispering?
  Surely thy speech shall be of her.
Thou water, O thou whispering wanderer,
    What message dost thou bring?

Say, hath not Love leaned low
  This hour beside thy far well-head,
And there through jealous hollowed fingers said
  The thing that most I long to know—
Murmuring with curls all dabbled in thy flow,
    And washed lips rosy red?

He told it to thee there
  Where thy voice hath a louder tone;
But where it welters to this little moan
  His will decrees that I should hear.
Now speak: for with the silence is no fear,
    And I am all alone.

Shall Time not still endow
  One hour with life, and I and she
Slake on love's lips the thirst of memory?
  Say, stream; lest Love should disavow
Thy service, and the bird upon the bough
    Sing first to tell it me.

What whisperest thou? Nay, why
  Name the dead hours? I mind them well:
Their ghosts in many darkened doorways dwell
  With desolate eyes to know them by.
That hour must still be born ere it can die:
    Of that I 'd have thee tell.

But hear, before thou speak!
  Withhold, I pray, the vain behest
That while the maze hath still its bower for quest
  My burning heart should cease to seek.
Be sure that Love ordained for souls more meek
    His roadside dells of rest.

Stream, when this silver thread
  In flood-time is a torrent brown,
May any bulwark bind thy foaming crown?
  Shall not the waters surge and spread
And to the crannied bowlders of their bed
    Still shoot the dead leaves down?

Let no rebuke find place
  In speech of thine: or it shall prove
That thou dost ill expound the words of Love,
  Even as thine eddy's rippling race
Would blur the perfect image of his face.
    I will have none thereof.

O learn and understand
  That 'gainst the wrongs himself did wreak
Love sought her aid; until her shadowy cheek
  And eyes beseeching gave command;
And compassed in her close compassionate hand
    My heart must burn and speak.

For then at last we spoke
  What eyes so oft had told to eyes
Through that long-lingering silence whose half-sighs
  Alone the buried secret broke,
Which with snatched hands and lips' reverberate stroke
    Then from the heart did rise.

But she is far away
  Now; nor the hours of night grown hoar
Bring yet to me, long gazing from the door,
  The wind-stirred robe of roseate gray
And rose-crown of the hour that leads the day
    When we shall meet once more.

Dark as thy blinded wave
  When brimming midnight floods the glen—
Bright as the laughter of thy runnels when
  The dawn yields all the light they crave;
Even so these hours to wound and that to save
    Are sisters in Love's ken.

Oh sweet her bending grace
  Then when I kneel beside her feet;
And sweet her eyes' o'erhanging heaven; and sweet
  The gathering folds of her embrace;
And her fall'n hair at last shed round my face
    When breaths and tears shall meet!

Beneath her sheltering hair,
  In the warm silence near her breast,
Our kisses and our sobs shall sink to rest;
  As in some still trance made aware
That day and night have wrought to fulness there,
    And Love has built our nest.

And as in the dim grove,
  When the rains cease that hushed them long,
'Mid glistening boughs the song-birds wake to song—
  So from our hearts deep-shrined in love,
While the leaves throb beneath, around, above,
    The quivering notes shall throng.

Till tenderest words found vain
  Draw back to wonder mute and deep,
And closed lips in closed arms a silence keep,
  Subdued by memory's circling strain—
The wind-rapt sound that the wind brings again
    While all the willows weep.

Then by her summoning art
  Shall memory conjure back the sere
Autumnal Springs, from many a dying year
  Born dead; and, bitter to the heart,
The very ways where now we walk apart
    Who then shall cling so near.

And with each thought new-grown,
  Some sweet caress or some sweet name

Digitized by Google

Low-breathed shall let me know her thought the same;
Making me rich with every tone
And touch of the dear heaven so long unknown
That filled my dreams with flame.

Pity and love shall burn
In her pressed cheek and cherishing hands;
And from the living spirit of love that stands
Between her lips to soothe and yearn,
Each separate breath shall clasp me round in turn
And loose my spirit's bands.

Oh passing sweet and dear,
Then when the worshipped form and face
Are felt at length in darkling close embrace;
Round which so oft the sun shone clear,
With mocking light and pitiless atmosphere,
In many an hour and place.

Ah me! with what proud growth
Shall that hour's thirsting race be run;
While, for each several sweetness still begun
Afresh, endures love's endless drouth:
Sweet hands, sweet hair, sweet cheeks, sweet eyes, sweet mouth,
Each singly wooed and won.

Yet most with the sweet soul
Shall love's espousals then be knit;
What time the governing cloud sheds peace from it
O'er tremulous wings that touch the goal,
And on the unmeasured height of Love's control
The lustral fires are lit.

Therefore, when breast and cheek
Now part, from long embraces free—
Each on the other gazing shall but see
A self that has no need to speak;
All things unsought, yet nothing more to seek—
One love in unity.

O water wandering past—
Albeit to thee I speak this thing,
O water, thou that wanderest whispering,
Thou keep'st thy counsel to the last.
What spell upon thy bosom should Love cast,
Its secret thence to wring?

Nay, must thou hear the tale
Of the past days—the heavy debt
Of life that obdurate time withholds—ere yet
To win thine ear these prayers prevail,
And by thy voice Love's self with high All-hail
Yield up the amulet?

How should all this be told?—
All the sad sum of wayworn days—
Heart's anguish in the impenetrable maze;
And on the waste uncolored wold
The visible burthen of the sun grown cold
And the moon's laboring gaze?

Alas! shall hope be nursed
On life's all-succoring breast in vain,
And made so perfect only to be slain?
Or shall not rather the sweet thirst
Even yet rejoice the heart with warmth dispersed
And strength grown fair again?

Stands it not by the door—
Love's Hour—till she and I shall meet;
With bodiless form and unapparent feet
That cast no shadow yet before,
Though round its head the dawn begins to pour
The breath that makes day sweet?

Its eyes invisible
Watch till the dial's thin-thrown shade
Be born—yea, till the journeying line be laid
Upon the point that wakes the spell,
And there in lovelier light than tongue can tell
Its presence stand arrayed.

Its soul remembers yet
Those sunless hours that passed it by;
And still it hears the night's disconsolate cry,
And feels the branches wringing wet
Cast on its brow, that may not once forget,
Dumb tears from the blind sky.

But oh! when now her foot
Draws near, for whose sake night and day
Were long in weary longing sighed away—
The hour of Love, 'mid airs grown mute,
Shall sing beside the door, and Love's own lute
Thrill to the passionate lay.

Thou know'st, for Love has told
Within thine ear, O stream, how soon
That song shall lift its sweet appointed tune.
O tell me, for my lips are cold,
And in my veins the blood is waxing old
Even while I beg the boon.

So, in that hour of sighs
Assuaged, shall we beside this stone
Yield thanks for grace; while in thy mirror shown
The twofold image softly lies,
Until we kiss, and each in other's eyes
Is imaged all alone.

Still silent? Can no art
Of Love's then move thy pity? Nay,
To thee let nothing come that owns his sway:
Let happy lovers have no part
With thee; nor even so sad and poor a heart
As thou hast spurned to-day.

To-day? Lo! night is here.
The glen grows heavy with some veil
Risen from the earth or fall'n to make earth pale;
And all stands hushed to eye and ear,
Until the night-wind shake the shade like fear
And every covert quail.

Ah! by another wave
On other airs the hour must come
Which to thy heart, my love, shall call me home.
Between the lips of the low cave
Against that night the lapping waters lave,
And the dark lips are dumb.

But there Love's self doth stand,
And with Life's weary wings far flown,
And with Death's eyes that make the water moan,
Gathers the water in his hand:
And they that drink know naught of sky or land,
But only love alone.

Digitized by Google

O soul-sequestered face
Far off—oh were that night but now!
So even beside that stream even I and thou
Through thirsting lips should draw Love's grace
And in the zone of that supreme embrace
Bind aching breast and brow.

O water whispering
Still through the dark into mine ears—
As with mine eyes, is it not now with hers?—
Mine eyes that add to thy cold spring,
Wan water, wandering water weltering,
This hidden tide of tears.

A NEW YEAR'S BURDEN.

ALONG the grass sweet airs are blown
Our way this day in Spring.
Of all the songs that we have known
Now which one shall we sing?
Not that, my love, ah no!—
Not this, my love? why, so!—
Yet both were ours, but hours will come and go.

The grove is all a pale frail mist,
The new year sucks the sun.
Of all the kisses that we kissed
Now which shall be the one?
Not that, my love, ah no!—
Not this, my love?—heigh-ho
For all the sweets that all the winds can blow!

The branches cross above our eyes,
The skies are in a net:
And what 's the thing beneath the skies
We two would most forget?
Not birth, my love, no, no—
Not death, my love, no, no—
The love once ours, but ours long hours ago.

LOVE-LILY.

BETWEEN the hands, between the brows,
Between the lips of Love-Lily,
A spirit is born whose birth endows
My blood with fire to burn through me;
Who breathes upon my gazing eyes,
Who laughs and murmurs in mine ear,
At whose least touch my color flies,
And whom my life grows faint to hear.

Within the voice, within the heart,
Within the mind of Love-Lily,
A spirit is born who lifts apart
His tremulous wings and looks at me;
Who on my mouth his finger lays,
And shows, while whispering lutes confer,
That Eden of Love's watered ways
Whose winds and spirits worship her.

Brows, hands, and lips, heart, mind, and voice,
Kisses and words of Love-Lily—
Oh! bid me with your joy rejoice
Till riotous longing rest in me!
Ah! let not hope be still distraught,
But find in her its gracious goal,
Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought,
Nor Love her body from her soul.

A LITTLE WHILE.

A LITTLE while a little love
The hour yet bears for thee and me
Who have not drawn the veil to see
If still our heaven be lit above.
Thou merely, at the day's last sigh,
Hast felt thy soul prolong the tone;
And I have heard the night-wind cry,
And deemed its speech mine own.

A little while a little love
The scattering autumn hoards for us
Whose bower is not yet ruinous,
Nor quite unleaved our songless grove.
Only across the shaken boughs
We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,
And deep in both our hearts they rouse
One wail for thee and me.

A little while a little love
May yet be ours who have not said
The word it makes our eyes afraid
To know that each is thinking of.
Not yet the end: be our lips dumb
In smiles a little season yet:
I 'll tell thee, when the end is come,
How we may best forget.

THE SEA-LIMITS.

CONSIDER the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible—
The murmur of the earth's own shell
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's—it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods;
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee:
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men,
Surge and sink back and surge again—
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips: they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not any thing but what thou art:
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

Digitized by Google

SONNETS.

O Thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
  Unto my lips dost evermore present
  The body and blood of Love in sacrament
Whom I have neared and felt thy breath to be
The inmost incense of his sanctuary;
  Who without speech hast owned him, and, intent
  Upon his will, thy life with mine hast blent,
And murmured o'er the cup, Remember me!—
O what from thee the grace, for me the prize,
  And what to love the glory—when the whole
  Of the deep stair thou tread'st to the dim shoal
And weary water of the place of sighs,
And there dost work deliverance, as thine eyes
  Draw up my prisoned spirit to thy soul!

What smouldering senses in death's sick delay
  Or seizure of malign vicissitude
  Can rob this body of honor, or denude
This soul of wedding raiment worn to-day?
For lo! even now my lady's lips did play
  With these my lips such consonant interlude
  As laurelled Orpheus longed for when he wooed
The half-drawn hungering face with that last lay.
I was a child beneath her touch—a man
  When breast to breast we clung, even I and she—
  A spirit when her spirit looked through me—
A god when all our life-breath met to fan
Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardors ran,
  Fire within fire, desire in deity.

Some ladies love the jewels in Love's zone
  And gold-tipped darts he hath for painless play
  In idle scornful hours he flings away;
And some that listen to his lute's soft tone
Do love to deem the silver praise their own;
  Some prize his blindfold sight; and there be they
  Who kissed his wings which brought him yesterday
And thank his wings to-day that he is flown.
My lady only loves the heart of Love:
  Therefore Love's heart, my lady, hath for thee
  His bower of unimagined flower and tree:
There kneels he now, and all-enhungered of
Thine eyes gray-lit in shadowing hair above,
  Seals with thy mouth his immortality.

Those envied places which do know her well,
  And are so scornful of this lonely place,
  Even now for once are emptied of her grace:
Nowhere but here she is: and while Love's spell
From his predominant presence doth compel
  All alien hours, an outworn populace,
  The hours of Love fill full the echoing space
With sweet confederate music favorable.
Now many memories make solicitous
  The delicate love-lines of her mouth, till, lit
  With quivering fire, the words take wing from it;
As here between our kisses we sit thus
  Speaking of things remembered, and so sit
Speechless while things forgotten call to us.

Girt in dark growths, yet glimmering with one star,
  O night desirous as the nights of youth!
  Why should my heart within thy spell, forsooth,
Now beat, as the bride's finger-pulses are
Quickened within the girdling golden bar?
  What wings are these that fan my pillow smooth?
  And why does Sleep, waved back by Joy and Ruth,
Tread softly round and gaze at me from far?
Nay, night deep-leaved! And would Love feign in thee
  Some shadowy palpitating grove that bears
  Rest for man's eyes and music for his ears?
O lonely night! art thou not known to me,
A thicket hung with masks of mockery
  And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears?

Whence came his feet into my field, and why?
  How is it that he sees it all so drear?
  How do I see his seeing, and how hear
The name his bitter silence knows it by?
This was the little fold of separate sky
  Whose pasturing clouds in the soul's atmosphere
  Drew living light from one continual year:
How should he find it lifeless? He or I?
Lo! this new Self now wanders round my field
  With plaints for every flower, and for each tree
  A moan, the sighing wind's auxiliary:
And o'er sweet waters of my life that yield
Unto his lips no draught but tears unsealed,
  Even in my place he weeps. Even I, not he.

When all desire at last and all regret
  Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
  What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,
  Or may the soul at once in a green plain
  Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain,
And call the dew-drenched flowering amulet?
Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
  Between the scriptured petals softly blown
  Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown—
Ah! let none other written spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there—
  Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM was born in 1828, at Ballyshannon, Ireland, where his father was a banker. He was educated at a provincial school, and began very early to contribute to periodicals. In 1850 he published "The Music-Master," a love-story in verse. This was followed by his "Day and Night Songs" in 1854, of which an enlarged and finely illustrated edition appeared in 1855. He published a long poem, "Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland," in 1864, and edited "The Ballad Book," one of the "Golden Treasury" series. He held an office in the customs service for some years, received a literary pension in 1864, and in 1874 became editor of "Fraser's Magazine." His poems have been republished in Boston.

VENUS OF THE NEEDLE.

O MARYANNE, you pretty girl,
  Intent on silky labor,
Of sempstresses the pink and pearl,
  Excuse a peeping neighbor!

Those eyes forever drooping, give
  The long brown lashes rarely;
But violets in the shadows live—
  For once unveil them fairly.

Hast thou not lent that flounce enough
  Of looks so long and earnest?
Lo, here 's more "penetrable stuff,"
  To which thou never turnest.

Ye graceful fingers, deftly sped!
  How slender, and how nimble!
O might I wind their skeins of thread,
  Or but pick up their thimble!

How blest the youth whom love shall bring,
  And happy stars embolden,
To change the dome into a ring,
  The silver into golden!

Who 'll steal some morning to her side
  To take her finger's measure,
While Maryanne pretends to chide,
  And blushes deep with pleasure.

Who 'll watch her sew her wedding-gown,
  Well conscious that it *is* hers;
Who 'll glean a tress, without a frown,
  With those so ready scissors.

Who 'll taste those ripenings of the south,
  The fragrant and delicious—
Don't put the pins into your mouth,
  O Maryanne, my precious!

I almost wish it were my trust
  To teach how shocking that is;
I wish I had not, as I must,
  To quit this tempting lattice.

Sure aim takes Cupid, fluttering foe,
  Across a street so narrow;
A thread of silk to string his bow,
  A needle for his arrow.

ÆOLIAN HARP.

WHAT saith the river to the rushes gray,
  Rushes sadly bending,
  River slowly wending?
Who can tell the whispered things they say?
  Youth, and prime, and life, and time,
  Forever, ever fled away!

Drop your withered garlands in the stream,
  Low autumnal branches,
  Round the skiff that launches
Wavering downward through the lands of dream,
  Ever, ever fled away!
  This the burden, this the theme.

What saith the river to the rushes gray,
  Rushes sadly bending,
  River slowly wending?
It is near the closing of the day,
  Near the night. Life and light
  Forever, ever fled away!

Draw him tideward down; but not in haste.
  Mouldering daylight lingers;
  Night with her cold fingers
Sprinkles moonbeams on the dim sea-waste.
  Ever, ever fled away!
  Vainly cherished! vainly chased!

What saith the river to the rushes gray,
  Rushes sadly bending,
  River slowly wending?
Where in darkest glooms his bed we lay,
  Up the cave moans the wave,
  Forever, ever, ever fled away!

Digitized by Google

OH! WERE MY LOVE.

Oh! were my love a country lass,
That I might see her every day;
And sit with her on hedgerow grass
Beneath a bough of may;
And find her cattle when astray,
Or help to drive them to the field,
And linger on our homeward way,
And woo her lips to yield
A twilight kiss before we parted,
Full of love, yet easy-hearted!

Oh! were my love a cottage maid,
To spin through many a winter night,
Where ingle-corner lends its shade
From fir-wood blazing bright!
Beside her wheel what dear delight
To watch the blushes go and come
With tender words, that took no fright
Beneath the friendly hum;
Or rising smile, or tear-drop swelling,
At a fireside legend's telling!

Oh! were my love a peasant girl,
That never saw the wicked town;
Was never dight with silk or pearl,
But graced a homely gown!
How less than weak were fashion's frown
To vex our unambitious lot;
How rich were love and peace to crown
Our green secluded cot;
Where Age would come serene and shining,
Like an autumn day's declining!

A DREAM.

I heard the dogs howl in the moonlight night,
And I went to the window to see the sight;
All the dead that ever I knew
Going one by one and two by two.

On they passed, and on they passed;
Townsfellows all from first to last;
Born in the moonlight of the lane,
And quenched in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we played
At soldiers once—but now more staid;
Those were the strangest sight to me
Who were drowned, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk; bent and weak too;
And some that I loved, and gasped to speak to;
Some but a day in their churchyard bed;
And some that I had not known were dead.

A long, long crowd—where each seemed lonely.
And yet of them all there was one, one only,
That raised a head, or looked my way;
And she seemed to linger, but might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face!
Ah, mother dear, might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest!

On, on, a moving bridge they made
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade;
Young and old, women and men;
Many long-forgot, but remembered then.

And first there came a bitter laughter;
And a sound of tears a moment after;
And then a music so lofty and gay,
That every morning, day by day,
I strive to recall it if I may.

LOVELY MARY DONNELLY.

Oh, lovely Mary Donnelly, it 's you I love the best!
If fifty girls were round you I 'd hardly see the rest.
Be what it may the time of day, the place be where it will,
Sweet looks of Mary Donnelly, they bloom before me still.

Her eyes like mountain water that 's flowing on a rock,
How clear they are, how dark they are! and they give me many a shock.
Red rowans warm in sunshine and wetted with a shower,
Could ne'er express the charming lip that has me in its power.

Her nose is straight and handsome, her eyebrows lifted up,
Her chin is very neat and pert, and smooth like a china cup,
Her hair 's the brag of Ireland, so weighty and so fine;
It 's rolling down upon her neck, and gathered in a twine.

The dance o' last Whit-Monday night exceeded all before;
No pretty girl for miles about was missing from the floor;
But Mary kept the belt of love, and oh but she was gay!
She danced a jig, she sung a song, that took my heart away.

When she stood up for dancing, her steps were so complete,
The music nearly killed itself to listen to her feet;
The fiddler moaned his blindness, he heard her so much praised,
But blessed himself he wasn't deaf when once her voice she raised.

And evermore I 'm whistling or lilting what you sung,
Your smile is always in my heart, your name beside my tongue;
But you 've as many sweethearts as you 'd count on both your hands,
And for myself there 's not a thumb or little finger stands.

Digitized by Google

Oh, you 're the flower o' womankind in country or in town;
The higher I exalt you, the lower I 'm cast down.
If some great lord should come this way, and see your beauty bright,
And you to be his lady, I 'd own it was but right.

Oh, might we live together in a lofty palace-hall,
Where joyful music rises, and where scarlet curtains fall!
Oh, might we live together in a cottage mean and small,
With sods of grass the only roof, and mud the only wall!

O lovely Mary Donnelly, your beauty 's my distress,
It 's far too beauteous to be mine, but I 'll never wish it less.
The proudest place would fit your face, and I am poor and low;
But blessings be about you, dear, wherever you may go!

SERENADE.

Oh, hearing sleep, and sleeping hear,
The while we dare to call thee dear,
So may thy dreams be good, although
The loving power thou canst not know!
As music parts the silence, lo!
Through heaven the stars begin to peep,
To comfort us that darkling pine
Because those fairer lights of thine
Have set into the Sea of Sleep.
Yet closèd still thine eyelids keep;
And may our voices through the sphere
Of Dreamland yet more softly rise
Than up these shadowy rural dells,
Where bashful Echo sleeping dwells,
And touch thy spirit to as soft replies.
Let peace from gentle guardian skies,
Till watches of the dark be worn,
Surround thy bed—a joyous morn
Make all the chamber rosy bright!
Good-night!—From far-off fields is borne
The drowsy Echo's faint "Good-night,"—
Good-night! Good-night!

THE DIRTY OLD MAN.

A LAY OF LEADENHALL.

In a dirty old house lived a Dirty Old Man;
Soap, towels, or brushes, were not in his plan.
For forty long years, as the neighbors declared,
His house never once had been cleaned or repaired.

'T was a scandal and shame to the business-like street,
One terrible blot in a ledger so neat;
The shop full of hardware, but black as a hearse,
And the rest of the mansion a thousand times worse.

Outside, the old plaster, all spatter and stain,
Looked spotty in sunshine and streaky in rain;
The window-sills sprouted with mildewy grass,
And the panes from being broken were known to be glass.

On the rickety signboard no learning could spell
The merchant who sold, or the goods he 'd to sell;
But for house and for man a new title took growth,
Like a fungus—the Dirt gave its name to them both.

Within, there were carpets and cushions of dust,
The wood was half rot, and the metal half rust,
Old curtains, half cobwebs, hung grimly aloof;
'T was a Spiders' Elysium from cellar to roof.

There, king of the spiders, the Dirty Old Man
Lives busy and dirty as ever he can;
With dirt on his fingers and dirt on his face,
For the Dirty Old Man thinks the dirt no disgrace.

From his wig to his shoes, from his coat to his shirt,
His clothes are a proverb, a marvel of dirt;
The dirt is pervading, unfading, exceeding—
Yet the Dirty Old Man has both learning and breeding.

Fine dames from their carriages, noble and fair,
Have entered his shop, less to buy than to stare;
And have afterward said, though the dirt was so frightful,
The Dirty Man's manners were truly delightful.

Up-stairs might they venture, in dirt and in gloom,
To peep at the door of the wonderful room
Such stories are told about, none of them true!
The keyhole itself has no mortal seen through.

That room—forty years since, folk settled and decked it.
The luncheon 's prepared, and the guests are expected.
The handsome young host he is gallant and gay,
For his love and her friends will be with him to-day.

With solid and dainty the table is dressed,
The wine beams its brightest, the flowers bloom their best;
Yet the host need not smile, and no guests will appear,
For his sweetheart is dead, as he shortly shall hear.

Full forty years since, turned the key in that door.
'T is a room deaf and dumb 'mid the city's uproar.
The guest, for whose joyance that table was spread,
May now enter as ghosts, for they're every one dead.

Digitized by Google

Through a chink in the shutter dim lights come
and go;
The seats are in order, the dishes a-row;
But the luncheon was wealth to the rat and the
mouse
Whose descendants have long left the Dirty Old
House.

Cup and platter are masked in thick layers of
dust;
The flowers fallen to powder, the wine swathed
in crust;
A nosegay was laid before one special chair,
And the faded blue ribbon that bound it lies there.

The old man has played out his parts in the
scene.
Wherever he now is, I hope he's more clean.
Yet give we a thought free of scoffing or ban
To that Dirty Old House and that Dirty Old Man.

[A singular man, named Nathaniel Bantley, for many years kept a large hardware-shop in Leadenhall Street, London. He was best known as Dirty Dick (Dick, for alliteration's sake, probably), and his place of business as the Dirty Warehouse. He died about the year 1809. These verses accord with the accounts respecting himself and his house.]

THE BRIGHT LITTLE GIRL.

Her blue eyes they beam and they twinkle,
Her lips have made smiling more fair;
On cheek and on brow there's no wrinkle,
But thousands of curls in her hair.

She 's little—you don't wish her taller;
Just half through the teens is her age;
And baby or lady to call her,
Were something to puzzle a sage!

Her walk is far better than dancing;
She speaks as another might sing;
And all by an innocent chancing,
Like lambkins and birds in the spring.

Unskilled in the airs of the city,
She 's perfect in natural grace;
She 's gentle, and truthful, and witty,
And ne'er spends a thought on her face.

Her face, with the fine glow that 's in it,
As fresh as an apple-tree bloom—
And oh! when she comes, in a minute,
Like sunbeams she brightens the room.

As taking in mind as in feature,
How many will sigh for her sake!
—I wonder, the sweet little creature,
What sort of a wife she would make?

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

The plunging storm flies fierce against the pane,
And thrills our cottage with redoubled shocks;
The chimney mutters, and the rafters strain;
Without, the breakers roar along the rocks.

See, from our fire and taper-lighted room,
How savage, pitiless, and uncontrolled
The grim horizon shows its tossing gloom
Of waves from unknown angry gulfs uprolled;

Where, underneath that black portentous lid,
A long pale space between the night and sea
Gleams awful; while in deepest darkness hid
All other things in our despair agree.

But lo! what star amid the thickest dark
A soft and unexpected dawn has made?
O welcome Lighthouse, thy unruffled spark,
Piercing the turmoil and the deathly shade!

By such a glimpse o'er the distracted wave
Full many a soul to-night is repossessed
Of courage and of order, strong to save;
And like effect it works within my breast.

Three faithful men have set themselves to stand
Against all storms that from the sky can blow,
Where peril must expect no aiding hand,
And tedium no relief may hope to know.

Nor shout they, passing brothers to inform
What weariness they feel, or what affright;
But tranquilly in solitude and storm
Abide from month to month, and show their
light.

LADY ALICE.

I.

Now what doth Lady Alice so late on the turret-stair,
Without a lamp to light her, but the diamond
in her hair;
When every arching passage overflows with
shallow gloom,
And dreams float through the castle, into every
silent room?

She trembles at her footsteps, although they fall
so light;
Through the turret-loopholes she sees the wild
midnight;
Broken vapors streaming across the stormy sky;
Down the empty corridors the blast doth moan
and cry.

She steals along a gallery; she passes by a
door;
And fast her tears are dropping down upon the
oaken floor;
And thrice she seems returning—but thrice she
turns again:
Now heavy lie the cloud of sleep on that old
father's brain!

Oh, well it were that *never* shouldst thou waken
from thy sleep!
For wherefore should they waken, who waken
but to weep?
No more, no more beside thy bed doth Peace
a vigil keep,
But Woe—a lion that awaits thy rousing for its
leap.

Digitized by Google

II.

An afternoon of April, no sun appears on high,
But a moist and yellow lustre fills the deepness of the sky:
And through the castle-gateway, left empty and forlorn,
Along the leafless avenue an honored bier is borne.

They stop. The long line closes up like some gigantic worm;
A shape is standing in the path, a wan and ghost-like form,
Which gazes fixedly; nor moves, nor utters any sound;
Then, like a statue built of snow, sinks down upon the ground.

And though her clothes are ragged, and though her feet are bare,
And though all wild and tangled falls her heavy silk-brown hair;
Though from her eyes the brightness, from her cheeks the bloom is fled,
They know their Lady Alice, the darling of the dead.

With silence, in her own old room the fainting form they lay,
Where all things stand unaltered since the night she fled away:
But who—but who shall bring to life her father from the clay?
But who shall give her back again her heart of a former day?

THERANIA.

O Unknown Beloved One! to the mellow season
Branches in the lawn make drooping bowers;
Vase and plot burn scarlet, gold, and azure;
Honeysuckles wind the tall gray turret,
And pale passion-flowers.
Come thou, come thou to my lonely thought,
O Unknown Beloved One.

Now, at evening twilight, dusky dew downwavers,
Soft stars crown the grove-encircled hill;
Breathe the new-mown meadows, broad and misty;
Through the heavy grass the rail is talking;
All beside is still.
Trace with me the wandering avenue,
O Unknown Beloved One.

In the mystic realm, and in the time of visions,
I thy lover have no need to woo;
There I hold thy hand in mine, thou dearest,
And thy soul in mine, and feel its throbbing,
Tender, deep, and true:
Then my tears are love, and thine are love,
O Unknown Beloved One!

Is thy voice a wavelet on the listening darkness?
Are thine eyes unfolding from their veil?
Wilt thou come before the signs of winter—
Days that shred the bough with trembling fingers,
Nights that weep and wail?
Art thou Love indeed, or art thou Death,
O Unknown Beloved One?

NANNY'S SAILOR-LAD.

Now fare-you-well! my bonny ship,
For I am for the shore.
The wave may flow, the breeze may blow,
They 'll carry me no more.

And all as I came walking
And singing up the sand,
I met a pretty maiden,
I took her by the hand.

But still she would not raise her head,
A word she would not speak,
And tears were on her eyelids,
Dripping down her cheek.

Now grieve you for your father?
Or husband might it be?
Or is it for a sweetheart
That 's roving on the sea?

It is not for my father,
I have no husband dear,
But oh! I had a sailor-lad
And he is lost, I fear.

Three long years
I am grieving for his sake,
And when the stormy wind blows loud,
I lie all night awake.

I caught her in my arms,
And she lifted up her eyes,
I kissed her ten times over
In the midst of her surprise.

Cheer up, cheer up, my Nanny,
And speak again to me;
O dry your tears, my darling,
For I 'll go no more to sea.

I have a love, a true true love,
And I have golden store,
The wave may flow, the breeze may blow,
They 'll carry me no more!

DEATH DEPOSED.

Death stately came to a young man, and said,
"If thou wert dead,
What matter?" The young man replied,
"See my young bride,
Whose life were all one blackness if I died.
My land requires me; and the world's self, too,
Methinks, would miss some things that I can do."

Then Death in scorn this only said,
"Be dead."

Digitized by Google

And so he was. And soon another's hand
Made rich his land.
The sun, too, of three summers had the might
To bleach the widow's hue, light and more light,
Again to bridal white.
And nothing seemed to miss beneath that sun
His work undone.

But Death soon met another man, whose eye
Was Nature's spy;
Who said: "Forbear thy too triumphant scorn.
The weakest born
Of all the sons of men is by his birth
Heir of the Might Eternal; and this Earth
Is subject to him in his place.
Thou leav'st no trace.

"Thou—the mock Tyrant that men fear and hate,
Grim fleshless Fate,
Cold, dark, and wormy thing of loss and tears!—
Not in the sepulchres
Hast lodging, but in my own crimsoned heart;
Where while it beats we call thee Life. Depart!
A name, a shadow, into any gulf,
Out of this world, which is not thine,
But mine:
Or stay!—because thou art
Only Myself."

THE MOWERS.

Where mountains round a lonely dale
Our cottage-roof enclose,
Come night or morn, the hissing pail
With yellow cream o'erflows;
And roused at break of day from sleep,
And cheerly trudging hither—
A scythe-sweep, and a scythe-sweep,
We mow the grass together.

The fog drawn up the mountain-side
And scattered flake by flake,
The chasm of blue above grows wide,
And richer blue the lake;
Gay sunlights o'er the hillocks creep,
And join for golden weather—
A scythe-sweep, and a scythe-sweep,
We mow the dale together.

The good-wife stirs at five, we know,
The master soon comes round,
And many swaths must lie a-row
Ere breakfast-horn shall sound;
The clover and the fiorin deep,
The grass of silvery feather—
A scythe-sweep, and a scythe-sweep,
We mow the dale together.

The noontide brings its welcome rest
Our toil-wet brows to dry;
Anew with merry stave and jest
The shrieking hone we ply.
White falls the brook from steep to steep
Among the purple heather—
A scythe-sweep, and a scythe-sweep,
We mow the dale together.

For dial, see, our shadows turn;
Low lies the stately mead;
A scythe, an hourglass, and an urn—
All flesh is grass, we read.
To-morrow's sky may laugh or weep,
To Heaven we leave it whether—
A scythe-sweep, and a scythe-sweep,
We 've done our task together.

SONG.

O Spirit of the Summer time!
Bring back the roses to the dells;
The swallow from her distant clime,
The honey-bee from drowsy cells.

Bring back the friendship of the sun;
The gilded evenings, calm and late,
When merry children homeward run,
And peeping stars bid lovers wait.

Bring back the singing, and the scent
Of meadow-lands at dewy prime;—
Oh, bring again my heart's content,
Thou Spirit of the Summer-time!

DOWN ON THE SHORE.

Down on the shore, on the sunny shore!
Where the salt smell cheers the land;
Where the tide moves bright under boundless light,
And the surge on the glittering strand;
Where the children wade in the shallow pools,
Or run from the froth in play;
Where the swift little boats with milk-white wings
Are crossing the sapphire bay,
And the ship in full sail, with a fortunate gale,
Holds proudly on her way;
Where the nets are spread on the grass to dry,
And asleep, hard by, the fishermen lie,
Under the tent of the warm blue sky,
With the hushing wave on its golden floor
To sing their lullaby.

Down on the shore, on the stormy shore!
Beset by a growling sea,
Whose mad waves leap on the rocky steep
Like wolves up a traveller's tree;
Where the foam flies wide, and an angry blast
Blows the curlew off, with a screech;
Where the brown sea-wrack, torn up by the roots,
Is flung out of fishes' reach;
Where the tall ship rolls on the hidden shoals,
And scatters her planks on the beach;
Where slate and straw through the village spin,
And a cottage fronts the fiercest din
With a sailor's wife sitting sad within,
Hearkening the wind and water's roar,
Till at last her tears begin.

Digitized by Google

JEAN INGELOW.

JEAN INGELOW was born in Boston, England, in 1830. Her father was a banker and a man of superior culture. Jean led a quiet and almost uneventful life, with books for her most intimate companions, till the autumn of 1863, when she published her first volume of poems. This gave her at once a high place in literature, and met with an enthusiastic popular reception in the United States as well as in her own country. She published "A Story of Doom, and other Poems," in 1867, and "The Monitions of the Unseen, and Poems of Love and Childhood," in 1870—the latter only in Boston, Mass. Her prose works are: "Studies for Stories," 1864; "Poor Matt," 1866; "Stories told to a Child," two series, 1866–'72; "A Sister's Bye-Hours," 1868; "Mopsa the Fairy," 1869; "Off the Skelligs," 1872; and "Fated to be Free," 1875. Her later poems do not reach the standard of her first volume, from which all the following selections are taken.

Miss Ingelow resides with her mother in London. Three times a week she gives at her house what she calls her "copyright dinner," to which she invites twelve needy persons, generally selecting those who have just been discharged from hospitals; and she is noted for her benevolence in various other ways.

DIVIDED.

I.

An empty sky, a world of heather,
  Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;
We two among them wading together,
  Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
  Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
  Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favor,
  Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
  Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth,
  And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth
  Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped into it,
  And God He knoweth how blithe we were!
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
  Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneel beside it,
  We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;
Drop over drop there filtered and slided,
  A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,
  Light was our talk as of faëry bells;
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
  Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
  We lapped the grass on that youngling spring;
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,
  And said, "Let us follow it westering."

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
  Circling above us the black rooks fly
Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows
  Flit on the blossoming tapestry.

Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
  As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back:
And lo, the sun like a lover darteth
  His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious weather
  Till one steps over the tiny strand,
So narrow, in sooth, that still together
  On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must sever.
  On either margin, our songs all done,
We move apart, while she singeth ever,
  Taking the course of the stooping sun.

He prays, "Come over"—I may not follow;
  I cry, "Return"—but he cannot come:
We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow;
  Our hands are hanging, our hearts are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
  A little talking of outward things;
The careless beck is a merry dancer,
  Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

A little pain when the beck grows wider;
  "Cross to me now—for her wavelets swell:"
"I may not cross"—and the voice beside her
  Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

Digitized by Google

No backward path; ah! no returning;
No second crossing that ripple's flow:
"Come to me now, for the west is burning;
Come ere it darkens!"—"Ah, no! ah, no!"

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—
The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
Passionate words as of one beseeching—
The loud beck drowns them; we walk, and weep.

V.

A yellow moon in splendor drooping,
A tired queen with her state oppressed,
Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
Her earth will weep her some dewy tears;
The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places
On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.

Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered
Round valleys like nests all ferny-lined;
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide;
A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,
On she goes under fruit-laden trees;
Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,
Up comes the lily and dries her bell;
But two are walking apart forever,
And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
The river hasteth, her banks recede.
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
Bear down the lily and drown the reed.

Stately prows are rising and bowing
(Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
And level sands for banks endowing
The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,
And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide,
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off side.

Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
My eyes brim over, it melts away:
Only my heart to my heart shall show it
As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly—
A knowledge greater than grief can dim—
I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—
Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,
The awful river so dread to see,
I say, "Thy breadth and thy depth forever
Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me."

HONORS.—PART I.

(A SCHOLAR IS MUSING ON HIS WANT OF SUCCESS.)

To strive—and fail. Yes, I did strive and fail;
I set mine eyes upon a certain night
To find a certain star—and could not hail
With them its deep-set light.

Fool that I was! I will rehearse my fault:
I, wingless, thought myself on high to lift
Among the winged—I set these feet that halt
To run against the swift.

And yet this man, that loved me so, can write—
That loves me, I would say, can let me see;
Or fain would have me think he counts but light
These Honors lost to me.

(THE LETTER OF HIS FRIEND.)

"What are they? that old house of yours which gave
Such welcomes oft to me, the sunbeams fall
Still, down the squares of blue and white which pave
Its hospitable hall.

"A brave old house! a garden full of bees,
Large dropping poppies, and queen hollyhocks,
With butterflies for crowns—tree peonies
And pinks and goldilocks.

"Go, when the shadow of your house is long
Upon the garden—when some new-waked bird,
Pecking and fluttering, chirps a sudden song,
And not a leaf is stirred;

"But every one drops dew from either edge
Upon its fellow, while an amber ray
Slants up among the tree-tops like a wedge
Of liquid gold—to play

"Over and under them, and so to fall
Upon that lane of water lying below—
That piece of sky let in, that you do call
A pond, but which I know

"To be a deep and wondrous world; for I
Have seen the trees within it—marvellous things!
So thick no bird betwixt their leaves could fly
But she would smite her wings;—

Digitized by Google

"Go there, I say; stand at the water's brink,
And shoals of spotted barbel you shall see
Basking between the shadows—look, and think
'This beauty is for me;

"'For me this freshness in the morning hours,
For me the water's clear tranquillity;
For me the soft descent of chestnut-flowers;
The cushat's cry for me.

"'The lovely laughter of the wind-swayed wheat;
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill;
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet
And wade and drink their fill.'

"Then saunter down that terrace whence the sea
All fair with wing-like sails you may discern;
Be glad, and say: 'This beauty is for me—
A thing to love and learn.

"'For me the bounding in of tides; for me
The laying bare of sands when they retreat;
The purple flush of calms, the sparkling glee
When waves and sunshine meet.'

"So after gazing, homeward turn and mount
To that long chamber in the roof; there tell
Your heart the laid-up lore it holds to count
And prize and ponder well.

"The lookings onward of the race before
It had a past to make it look behind;
Its reverent wonders, and its doubtings sore,
Its adorations blind.

"The thunder of its war-songs, and the glow
Of chants to freedom by the old world sung;
The sweet love-cadences that long ago
Dropped from the old-world tongue.

"And then this new-world lore that takes account
Of tangled star-dust; maps the triple whirl
Of blue and red, and argent worlds that mount
And greet the Irish Earl;

"Or float across the tube that HERSCHEL sways,
Like pale-rose chaplets, or like sapphire mist;
Or hang or droop along the heavenly ways,
Like scarves of amethyst.

"Oh strange it is and wide the new-world lore,
For next it treateth of our native dust!
Must dig out buried monsters, and explore
The green earth's fruitful crust;

"Must write the story of her seething youth—
How lizards paddled in her lukewarm seas;
Must show the cones she ripened, and forsooth
Count seasons on her trees;

"Must know her weight, and pry into her age,
Count her old beach-lines by their tidal swell;
Her sunken mountains name, her craters gauge,
Her cold volcanoes tell;

"And treat her as a ball, that one might pass
From this hand to the other—such a ball
As he could measure with a blade of grass,
And say it was but small!

"Honors! O friend, I pray you bear with me:
The grass hath time to grow in meadow-lands,
And leisurely the opal murmuring sea
Breaks on her yellow sands;

"And leisurely the ring-dove on her nest
Broods till her tender chick will peck the shell;
And leisurely down fall from ferny crest,
The dew-drops on the well;

"And leisurely your life and spirit grew,
With yet the time to grow and ripen free:
No judgment past withdraws that boon from you,
Nor granteth it to me.

"Still must I plod, and still in cities moil;
From precious leisure, learned leisure far,
Dull my best self with handling common soil;
Yet mine those honors are.

"Mine they are called; they are a name which means
'This man had steady pulses, tranquil nerves;
Here, as in other fields, the most he gleans
Who works and never swerves.

"'We measure not his mind; we cannot tell
What lieth under, over, or beside
The test we put him to; he doth excel,
We know, where he is tried;

"'But, if he boast some further excellence—
Mind to create as well as to attain;
To sway his peers by golden eloquence,
As wind doth shift a fane;

"'To sing among the poets—we are naught:
We cannot drop a line into that sea
And read its fathoms off, nor gauge a thought,
Nor map a simile.

"'It may be of all voices sublunar
The only one he echoes we did try;
We may have come upon the only star
That twinkles in his sky.'

"And so it was with me."
O false my friend!
False, false, a random charge, a blame undue;
Wrest not fair reasoning to a crooked end:
False, false, as you are true!

But I read on: "And so it was with me!
Your golden constellations lying apart
They neither hailed nor greeted heartily,
Nor noted on their chart.

"And yet to you and not to me belong
Those finer instincts that, like second sight
And hearing, catch creation's undersong,
And see by inner light.

"You are a well, whereon I, gazing, see
Reflections of the upper heavens—a well
From whence come deep, deep echoes up to me—
Some under-wave's low swell.

Digitized by Google

"I cannot soar into the heights you show,
Nor dive among the deeps that you reveal;
But it is much that high things are to know,
That deep things are to feel.

"'T is yours, not mine, to pluck out of your breast
Some human truth, whose workings recondite
Were unattired in words, and manifest
And hold it forth to light;

"And cry, 'Behold this thing that I have found.'
And though they knew not of it till that day,
Nor should have done with no man to expound
Its meaning, yet they say,

"'We do accept it: lower than the shoals
We skim this diver went, nor did create,
But find it for us deeper in our souls
Than we can penetrate.'

"You were to me the world's interpreter,
The man that taught me Nature's unknown tongue,
And to the notes of her wild dulcimer
First set sweet words, and sung.

"And what am I to you? A steady hand
To hold, a steadfast heart to trust withal;
Merely a man that loves you, and will stand
By you, whate'er befall.

"But need we praise his tendance tutelar
Who feeds a flame that warms him? Yet 't is true
I love you for the sake of what you are,
And not of what you do.

"As heaven's high twins, whereof in Tyrian blue
The one revolveth, through his course immense
Might love his fellow of the damask hue,
For like, and difference.

"For different pathways evermore decreed
To intersect, but not to interfere;
For common goal, two aspects, and one speed,
One centre and one year;

"For deep affinities, for drawings strong,
That by their nature each must needs exert;
For loved alliance, and for union long,
That stands before desert.

"And yet desert makes brighter not the less,
For nearest his own star he shall not fail
To think those rays unmatched for nobleness,
That distance counts but pale.

"Be pale afar, since still to me you shine,
And must while Nature's eldest law shall hold;"—
Ah, there 's the thought which makes his random line
Dear as refinèd gold!

Then shall I drink this draught of oxymel,
Part sweet, part sharp? Myself o'erprized to know
Is sharp; the cause is sweet, and truth to tell
Few would that cause forego.

Which is that this of all the men on earth
Doth love me well enough to count me great—
To think my soul and his of equal girth?
O liberal estimate!

And yet it is so; he is bound to me,
For human love makes aliens near of kin;
By it I rise, there is equality:
I rise to thee, my twin.

"Take courage"—courage; ay, my purple peer,
I will take courage; for thy Tyrian rays
Refresh me to the heart, and strangely dear
And healing is thy praise.

"Take courage," quoth he, "and respect the mind
Your Maker gave, for good your fate fulfil;
The fate round many hearts your own to wind."
Twin soul, I will! I will!

HONORS.—PART II.

(THE ANSWER.)

As one who, journeying, checks the rein in haste
Because a chasm doth yawn across his way
Too wide for leaping, and too steeply faced
For climber to essay—

As such a one, being brought to sudden stand,
Doubts all his foregone path if 't were the true,
And turns to this and then to the other hand
As knowing not what to do,—

So I, being checked, am with my path at strife
Which led to such a chasm, and there doth end.
False path! it cost me priceless years of life,
My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went up—
The flute that he was wont to play upon:
It dropped beside the jonquil's milk-white cup,
And freckled cowslips wan.

Dropped from his heedless hand when dazed and mute,
He sailed upon the eagle's quivering wing,
Aspiring, panting—ay, it dropped—the flute
Erewhile a cherished thing.

Among the delicate grasses and the bells
Of crocuses that spotted a rill-side,
I picked up such a flute, and its clear swells
To my young lips replied.

I played thereon and its response was sweet;
But lo, they took from me that solacing reed.
"O shame!" they said; "such music is not meet;
Go up like Ganymede."

Digitized by Google

Go up, despise these humble grassy things,
Sit on the golden edge of yonder cloud.
Alas! though ne'er for me those eagle-wings
Stooped from their eyry proud.

My flute! and flung away its echo's sleep;
But as for me, my life-pulse beateth low;
And, like a last-year's leaf enshrouded deep
Under the drifting snow,

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the sand,
Of torrid swamps, with all her merchandise,
And left to rot betwixt the sea and land,
My helpless spirit lies.

Ruing, I think for what then was I made;
What end appointed for—what use designed?
Now let me right this heart that was bewrayed—
Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend, at noon to-day
Over our cliffs a white mist lay unfurled,
So thick, one standing on their brink might say,
"Lo, here doth end the world."

A white abyss beneath, and naught beside;
Yet, hark! a cropping sound not ten feet down,
Soon I could trace some browsing lambs that hied
Through rock-paths cleft and brown.

And here and there green tufts of grass peered through
Salt lavender and sea-thrift; then behold
The mist subsiding ever, bared to view
A beast of giant mould.

She seemed a great sea-monster lying at ease
With all her cubs about her: but deep—deep—
The subtle mist went floating; its descent
Showed the world's end was steep.

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till, lo,
The sprawling monster was a rock, her brood
Were boulders, whereon sea-mews white as snow
Sat watching for their food.

Then once again it sank, its day was done:
Part rolled away, part vanished utterly;
And, glimmering softly under the white sun,
Behold! a great white sea.

O that the mist which veileth my To come
Would so dissolve and yield unto mine eyes
A worthy path! I 'd count not wearisome
Long toil, nor enterprise,

But strain to reach it; ay, with wrestlings stout
And hopes that even in the dark will grow
(Like plants in dungeons, reaching feelers out),
And ploddings wary and slow.

Is there such a path already made to fit
The measure of my foot? it shall atone
For much, if I at length may light on it
And know it for mine own.

But is there none? why, then, 't is more than well:
And glad at heart myself will hew one out,
Let me be only sure; forsooth to tell
The sorest dole is doubt—

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart, which mars
All sweetest colors in its dimness same;
A soul-mist, through whose rifts familiar stars
Beholding, we misname.

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes
Those images that on its breast reposed;
A fold upon a wind-swayed flag, that breaks
The motto it disclosed.

O doubt! O doubt! I know my destiny;
I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my breast;
I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,
And flatter thee to rest.

There is no certainty, "my bosom's guest,"
No proving for the things whereof ye wot;
For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,
They are, and they are not.

But surely as they are, for God is truth,
And as they are not, for we saw them die,
So surely from the heaven drops light for youth,
If youth will walk thereby.

And can I see this light? It may be so;
"But see it thus and thus," my fathers said.
The living do not rule this world; ah, no!
It is the dead, the dead.

Shall I be slave to every noble soul,
Study the dead, and to their spirits bend;
Or learn to read my own heart's folded scroll,
And make self-rule my end?

Thought from without—oh shall I take on trust,
And life from others modelled steal or win;
Or shall I heave to light, and clear of rust
My true life from within?

Oh, let me be myself! But where, oh where
Under this heap of precedent, this mound
Of customs, modes, and maxims, cumbrance rare,
Shall the Myself be found?

O thou *Myself*, thy fathers thee debarred
None of their wisdom, but their folly came
Therewith: they smoothed thy path, but made it hard
For thee to quit the same.

With glosses they obscured God's natural truth,
And with tradition tarnished His revealed;
With vain protections they endangered youth,
With layings bare they sealed.

What aileth thee, myself? Alas! thy hands
Are tied with old opinions—heir and son;
Thou hast inherited thy father's lands
And all his debts thereon.

O that some power would give me Adam's eyes,
O for the straight simplicity of Eve!
For I see naught, or grow, poor fool, too wise
With seeing to believe.

Exemplars may be heaped until they hide
The rules that they were made to render plain;
Love may be watched her nature to decide,
Until love's self doth wane.

Digitized by Google

Ah me! and when forgotten and foregone
We leave the learning of departed days,
And cease the generations past to con
Their wisdom and their ways,

When fain to learn we lean into the dark—
And grope to feel the floor of the abyss;
Or find the secret boundary-lines which mark
Where soul and matter kiss—

Fair world! these puzzled souls of ours grow weak
With beating their bruised wings against the rim
That bounds their utmost flying, when they seek
The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against their wires;
Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond;—
And what avails, if still to our desires
Those far-off gulfs respond?

Contentment comes not therefore; still there lies
An outer distance when the first is hailed,
And still forever yawns before our eyes
An UTMOST—that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,
We leave the central fields a fallow part;
To feed the eye more precious things amerce,
And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong: the old foundations rock;
One scorns at him of old who gazed unshod;
One striking with a pickaxe thinks the shock
Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way
(Life is so short), they dig into the rind,
And they are very sorry, so they say,—
Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred—ay, and must be told:
There is a story long beloved of man;
We must forego it, for it will not hold—
Nature had no such plan.

And then, if "God hath said it," some should cry,
We have the story from the fountain-head:
Why, then, what better than the old reply,
The first "Yea HATH God said?"

The garden, O the garden, must it go,
Source of our hope and our most dear regret?
The ancient story, must it no more show
How man may win it yet?

And all upon the Titan child's decree,
The baby Science, born but yesterday,
That in its rash unlearned infancy
With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this world,
And little crevices that it could reach,
Discovered certain bones laid up, and furled
Under an ancient beach.

And other waifs that lay to its young mind
Some fathoms lower than they ought to lie,
By gain whereof it could not fail to find
Much proof of ancientry.

Hints at a Pedigree withdrawn and vast,
Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,
Or soulless origin, and twilight passed
In the primeval seas.

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath been
Of truth not meant for man inheritor;
As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er foreseen
And not provided for.

Knowledge ordained to live! although the fate
Of much that went before it was—to die;
And be called ignorance by such as wait
Till the next drift comes by.

O marvellous credulity of man!
If God indeed kept secret, couldst thou know,
Or follow up the mighty Artisan
Unless He willed it so?

And canst thou of the Maker think in sooth
That of the Made he shall be found at fault,
And dream of wresting from Him hidden truth
By force or by assault?

But if He keeps not secret—if thine eyes
He openeth to His wondrous work of late—
Think how in soberness thy wisdom lies,
And have the grace to wait.

Wait, nor against the half-learned lesson fret,
Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,
Because thou canst not reconcile as yet
The worker and the word.

Either the worker did in ancient days
Give us the word, His tale of love and might;
And if in truth He gave it us, who says
He did not give it right?

Or else He gave it not, and then indeed
We know not if HE IS—by whom our years
Are portioned, who the orphan moons doth lead,
And the unfathered spheres.

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,
And know not whence we come and whose we be,
Comfortless mourners for the mount of God,
The rocks of Calvary.

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved page
Wrought us by some who thought with death to cope;
Despairing comforters, from age to age
Sowing the seeds of hope.

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us
Out of the slough where passed our unknown youth;
Beneficent liars, who have gifted us
With sacred love of truth.

Farewell to them: yet pause ere thou unmoor
And set thine ark adrift on unknown seas.
How wert thou bettered so, or more secure
Thou, and thy destinies?

Digitized by Google

And if thou searchest, and art made to fear
Facing of unread riddles dark and hard,
And mastering not their majesty austere,
Their meaning locked and barred:

How would it make the weight and wonder less,
If lifted from immortal shoulders down
The worlds were cast on seas of emptiness,
In realms without a crown!

And (if there were no God) were left to rue
Dominion of the air and of the fire;
Then if there be a God, "Let God be true,
And every man a liar."

But as for me, I do not speak as one
That is exempt; I am with life at feud;
My heart reproacheth me, as there were none
Of so small gratitude.

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart o' mine,
And still thy yearning and resolve thy doubt?
That which I know, and that which I divine,
Alas! have left thee out.

I have aspired to know the might of God,
As if the story of His love was furled,
Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had trod
Of this redeemèd world.

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into the deep,
To grope for that abyss whence evil grew,
And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot weep,
Hungry and desolate flew.

As if their legions did not one day crowd
The death-pangs of the Conquering Good to see;
As if a sacred head had never bowed
In death for man—for me.

Nor ransomed back the souls beloved, the sons
Of men, from thraldom with the nether kings
In that dark country where those evil ones
Trail their unhallowed wings.

And didst Thou love the race that loved not Thee,
And didst Thou take to Heaven a human brow?
Dost plead with man's voice by the marvellous sea?
Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O Kinsman loved, but not enough!
O Man, with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and Thine,
By that one nature which doth hold us kin,
By that high heaven where, sinless, Thou dost shine
To draw us sinners in,

By Thy last silence in the judgment-hall,
By long foreknowledge of the deadly tree,
By darkness, by the wormwood and the gall,
I pray Thee visit me.

Come, lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
Die ere the guest adored she entertain—
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly day
Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Come, weary-eyed from seeking in the night
Thy wanderers strayed upon the pathless wold,
Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for light,
And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning—deign reply:
Is there, O is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briers across Thy pathway thrust,
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign to trust
My hands to gather out?

Oh if Thou wilt, and if such bliss might be,
It were a cure for doubt, regret, delay—
Let my lost pathway go—what aileth me?—
There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy workman toil,
And break unthanked of man the stubborn clod?
It is enough, for sacred is the soil,
Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word
And sing His glory wrong.

Friend, it is time to work. I say to thee,
Thou dost all earthly good by much excel;
Thou and God's blessing are enough for me:
My work—my work, farewell!

SUPPER AT THE MILL.

Mother. WELL, Frances.
Frances. Well, good mother, how are you?
M. I 'm hearty, lass, but warm; the weather 's warm:
I think 't is mostly warm on market-days.
I met with George behind the mill: said he,
"Mother, go in and rest awhile."
F. Ay, do,
And stay to supper; put your basket down.
M. Why, now, it is not heavy?
F. Willie, man,
Get up and kiss your Granny. Heavy? no;
Some call good churning luck; but, luck or skill,
Your butter mostly comes as firm and sweet
As if 't was Christmas. So you sold it all.
M. All but this pat that I put by for George;
He always loved my butter.
F. That he did.
M. And has your speckled hen brought off her brood?

Digitized by Google

F. Not yet; but that old duck I told you of,
She hatched eleven out of twelve to-day.
Child. And, Granny, they 're so yellow.
M. Ay, my lad,
Yellow as gold—yellow as Willie's hair.
C. They 're all mine, Granny, father says they 're mine.
M. To think of that!
F. Yes, Granny, only think!
Why father means to sell them when they 're fat,
And put the money in the savings-bank,
And all against our Willie goes to school:
But Willie would not touch them—no, not he;
He knows that father would be angry else.
C. But I want one to play with—oh, I want
A little yellow duck to take to bed!
M. What! would ye rob the poor old mother, then?
F. Now, Granny, if you 'll hold the babe a while;
'T is time I took up Willie to his crib.
[*Exit* FRANCES.

[*Mother sings to the infant.*]

Playing on the virginals,
Who but I! Sae glad, sae free,
Smelling for all cordials,
The green mint and marjorie;
Set among the budding broom,
Kingcup and daffodilly;
By my side I made him room:
O love my Willie!

"Like me, love me, girl o' gowd,"
Sang he to my nimble strain,
Sweet his ruddy lips o'erflowed
Till my heartstrings rang again;
By the broom, the bonny broom,
Kingcup and daffodilly;
In my heart I made him room:
O love my Willie!

"Pipe and play, dear heart," sang he;
"I must go, yet pipe and play;
Soon I 'll come and ask of thee
For an answer yea or nay;"
And I waited till the flocks
Panted in yon waters stilly,
And the corn stood in the shocks:
O love my Willie!

I thought first when thou didst come
I would wear the ring for thee,
But the year told out its sum,
Ere again thou sat'st by me;
Thou hadst naught to ask that day
By kingcup and daffodilly;
I said neither yea nor nay:
O love my Willie!

Enter GEORGE.

George. Well, mother, 't is a fortnight now, or more,
Since I set eyes on you.
M. Ay, George, my dear,
I reckon you 've been busy: so have we.
G. And how does father?
M. He gets through his work,
But he grows stiff, a little stiff, my dear;
He 's not so young, you know, by twenty years
As I am—not so young by twenty years,
And I 'm past sixty.
G. Yet he 's hale and stout,
And seems to take a pleasure in his pipe;
And seems to take a pleasure in his cows,
And a pride, too.
M. And well he may, my dear.
G. Give me the little one, he tires your arm;
He 's such a kicking, crowing, wakeful rogue,
He almost wears our lives out with his noise
Just at day-dawning, when we wish to sleep,
What! you young villain, would you clench your fist
In father's curls? a dusty father, sure,
And you 're as clean as wax.
Ay, you may laugh,
But if you live a seven years more or so
These hands of yours will all be brown and scratched
With climbing after nest-eggs. They 'll go down
As many rat-holes as are round the mere;
And you 'll love mud, all manner of mud and dirt,
As your father did afore you, and you 'll wade
After young water-birds; and you 'll get bogged
Setting of eel-traps, and you 'll spoil your clothes,
And come home torn and dripping: then, you know,
You 'll feel the stick—you 'll feel the stick, my lad!

Enter FRANCES.

F. You should not talk so to the blessed babe—
How can you, George? why, he may be in heaven
Before the time you tell of.
M. Look at him:
So earnest, such an eager pair of eyes!
He thrives, my dear.
F. Yes, that he does, thank God!
My children are all strong.
M. 'T is much to say;
Sick children fret their mothers' hearts to shreds
And do no credit to their keep nor care.
Where is your little lass?
F. Your daughter came
And begged her of us for a week or so.
M. Well, well, she might be wiser, that she might;
For she can sit at ease and pay her way;
A sober husband, too—a cheerful man—
Honest as ever stepped, and fond of her;
Yet she is never easy, never glad,
Because she has not children. Well-a-day!
If she could know how hard her mother worked,
And what ado I had, and what a moil
With my half-dozen! Children, ay forsooth,
They bring their own love with them when they come,
But if they come not there is peace and rest;
The pretty lambs! and yet she cries for more:
Why the world 's full of them, and so is heaven—
They are not rare.
G. No, mother, not at all;
But Hannah must not keep our Fanny long—
She spoils her.
M. Ah! folks spoil their children now;
When I was a young woman 't was not so:

Digitized by Google

We made our children fear us, made them work,
Kept them in order.
G. Were not proud of them—
Eh, mother?
M. I set store by mine, 't is true,
But then I had good cause.
G. My lad, d' ye hear?
Your Granny was not proud, by no means proud!
She never spoilt your father—no, not she,
Nor ever made him sing at harvest-home,
Nor at the forge, nor at the baker's shop,
Nor to the doctor while she lay abed
Sick, and he crept up-stairs to share her broth.
M. Well, well, you were my youngest; and, what 's more,
Your father loved to hear you sing—he did,
Although, good man, he could not tell one tune
From the other.
F. No, he got his voice from you:
Do use it, George, and send the child to sleep.
G. What must I sing?
F. The ballad of the man
That is so shy he cannot speak his mind.
G. Ay, of the purple grapes and crimson leaves;
But, mother, put your shawl and bonnet off.
And, Frances, lass, I brought some cresses in:
Just wash them, toast the bacon, break some eggs,
And let 's to supper shortly.

[*Sings.*]

My neighbor White; we met to-day,
He always had a cheerful way,
As if he breathed at ease;
My neighbor White lives down the glade,
And I live higher, in the shade
Of my old walnut-trees.

So many lads and lasses small,
To feed them all, to clothe them all,
Must surely tax his wit;
I see his thatch when I look out,
His branching roses creep about
And vines half-smother it.

There white-haired urchins climb his eaves
And little watch-fires heap with leaves,
And milky filberts hoard;
And there his oldest daughter stands
With downcast eyes and skilful hands
Before her ironing-board.

She comforts all her mother's days,
And with her sweet obedient ways
She makes her labor light;
So sweet to hear, so fair to see!
Oh, she is much too good for me,
That lovely Lettice White!

'T is hard to feel one's self a fool!
With that same lass I went to school;
I then was great and wise;
She read upon an easier book,
And I—I never cared to look
Into her shy blue eyes.

And now I know they must be there
Sweet eyes, behind those lashes fair
That will not raise their rim;
If maids be shy, he cures who can;
But if a man be shy—a man—
Why then the worse for him!
My mother cries, "For such a lad
A wife is easy to be had
And always to be found;
A finer scholar scarce can be,
And for a foot and leg," says she,
"He beats the country round!

"My handsome boy must stoop his head
To clear her door whom he would wed."
Weak praise, but fondly sung!
"O mother! scholars sometimes fail,—
And what can foot and leg avail
To him that wants a tongue!"

When by her ironing-board I sit
Her little sisters round me flit,
And bring me forth their store;
Dark cluster grapes of dusty blue,
And small sweet apples, bright of hue,
And crimson to the core.

But she abideth silent, fair,
All shaded by her flaxen hair,
The blushes come and go;
I look, and I no more can speak
Than the red sun that on her cheek
Smiles as he lieth low.

Sometimes the roses by the latch,
Or scarlet vine-leaves from her thatch,
Come sailing down like birds;
When from their drifts her board I clear
She thanks me, but I scarce can hear
The shyly-uttered words.

Oft have I wooed sweet Lettice White
By daylight and by candlelight
When we two were apart.
Some better day come on apace,
And let me tell her face to face,
"Maiden, thou hast my heart."

How gently rock yon poplars high
Against the reach of primrose sky
With heaven's pale candles stored!
She sees them all, sweet Lettice White;
I 'll e'en go sit again to-night
Beside her ironing-board!

Why, you young rascal! who would think it, now?
No sooner do I stop than you look up.
What would you have your poor old father do?
'T was a brave song, long-winded, and not loud.
M. He heard the bacon sputter on the fork,
And heard his mother's step across the floor.
Where did you get that song—'t is new to me?
G. I bought it of a pedlar.
M. Did you so?
Well, you were always for the love-songs, George.
F. My dear, just lay his head upon your arm,
And if you 'll pace and sing two minutes more
He needs must sleep—his eyes are full of sleep.
G. Do you sing, mother.
F. Ay, good mother, do;
'T is long since we have heard you.
M. Like enough;
I 'm an old woman, and the girls and lads

Digitized by Google

I used to sing to sleep o'ertop me now.
What should I sing for?
G. Why, to pleasure us.
Sing in the chimney-corner, where you sit.
And I 'll pace gently with the little one.

[*M. sings.*]

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,
My old sorrow wakes and cries,
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,
And a scarlet sun doth rise;
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,
And the icy founts run free;
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,
And plunge, and sail in the sea.

Oh, my lost love, and my own, own love,
And my love that loved me so!
Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?
Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore;
I remember all that I said;
And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more
Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail
To the ice-fields and the snow;
Thou wert sad, for thy love did not avail,
And the end I could not know.
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
Whom that day I held not dear?
How could I know I should love thee away
When I did not love thee anear?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain
With the faded bents o'erspread;
We shall stand no more by the seething main
While the dark wrack drives o'erhead;
We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,
Where thy last farewell was said;
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
When the sea gives up her dead.

F. Asleep at last, and time he was, indeed.
Turn back the cradle-quilt, and lay him in;
And, mother, will you please to draw your chair?—
The supper's ready.

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE.

(1571.)

The old mayor climbed the belfry-tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Play all your changes, all your swells,
Ply uppe 'The Brides of Enderby.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was naught of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea-wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes:
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth,
Faintly came her milking-song.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow-grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking-shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
When I begin to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;
And all the the aire it seemeth mee
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
The steeple towered from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country-side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swannerds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, "And why should this thing be,
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne.
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby?'"

Digitized by Google

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
  Came riding downe with might and main.
He raised a shout as he drew on,
  Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea-wall (he cried) is downe,
  The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
  Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds away
  With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
  Afar I heard her milking-song."
He looked across the grassy sea,
To right, to left, "Ho Enderby!"
They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast;
  For lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
  And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed,
  Shook all her trembling banks amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
  Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then banks came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
  The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
  Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
  The noise of bells went sweeping by:
I marked the lofty beacon-light
  Stream from the church-tower, red and high,
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor-lads to guide
  From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
  And yet the ruddy beacon glowed:
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?
  Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare,
The waters laid thee at his doore,
  Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
  That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
  To manye more than myne and me:
But each will mourn his own (she saith).
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha, Cusha, Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha, Cusha!" all along,
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
  Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water, winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
  Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling,
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow-grasses mellow,
  Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
  Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;
  Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking-shed."

SONGS OF SEVEN.

SEVEN TIMES ONE.—EXULTATION.

There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There's no rain left in heaven:
I've said my "seven times" over and over,
  Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
  My birthday lessons are done;
The lambs play always, they know no better;
  They are only one times one.

O moon! in the night I have seen you sailing
  And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your light is failing—
  You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
  That God has hidden your face?
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
  And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
  You've powdered your legs with gold!
O brave marsh-mary buds, rich and yellow,
  Give me your money to hold!

Digitized by Google

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,
Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!
O cuckoo-pint, toll me the purple clapper
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young ones in it;
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet—
I am seven times one to-day.

SEVEN TIMES TWO.—ROMANCE.

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out your changes,
How many soever they be,
And let the brown meadow-lark's note as he ranges
Come over, come over to me.

Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by swelling
No magical sense conveys,
And bells have forgotten their old art of telling
The fortune of future days

"Turn again, turn again," once they rang cheerily,
While a boy listened alone;
Made his heart yearn again, musing so wearily
All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells! I forgive you; your good days are over,
And mine, they are yet to be;
No listening, no longing shall aught, aught discover:
You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green matted heather,
And hangeth her hoods of snow;
She was idle, and slept till the sunshiny weather:
Oh children take long to grow.

I wish, and I wish that the spring would go faster,
Nor long summer bide so late;
And I could grow on like the foxglove and aster,
For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts shall discover,
While dear hands are laid on my head:
"The child is a woman, the book may close over,
For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story—the birds cannot sing it,
Not one, as he sits on the tree;
The bells cannot ring it, but long years, O bring it!
Such as I wish it to be.

SEVEN TIMES THREE.—LOVE.

I LEANED out of window, I smelt the white clover,
Dark, dark was the garden, I saw not the gate;
"Now, if there be footsteps, he comes, my one lover—
Hush, nightingale, hush! O sweet nightingale, wait
Till I listen and hear
If a step draweth near,
For my love he is late!

"The skies in the darkness stoop nearer and nearer,
A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in the tree,
The fall of the water comes sweeter, comes clearer:
To what art thou listening, and what dost thou see?
Let the star-clusters glow,
Let the sweet waters flow,
And cross quickly to me.

"You night-moths that hover where honey brims over
From sycamore-blossoms, or settle or sleep;
You glow-worms, shine out, and the pathway discover
To him that comes darkling along the rough steep.
Ah, my sailor, make haste,
For the time runs to waste,
And my love lieth deep—

"Too deep for swift telling: and yet my one lover
I've conned thee an answer, it waits thee to-night."
By the sycamore passed he, and through the white clover,
Then all the sweet speech I had fashioned took flight;
But I'll love him more, more
Than e'er wife loved before,
Be the days dark or bright.

SEVEN TIMES FOUR.—MATERNITY.

HEIGH HO! daisies and buttercups,
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall,
When the wind wakes how they rock in the grasses,
And dance with the cuckoo-buds, slender and small:
Here's two bonny boys, and here's mother's own lasses,
Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups:
Mother shall thread them a daisy chain;
Sing them a song of the pretty hedge-sparrow,
That loved her brown little ones, loved them full fain;
Sing, "Heart, thou art wide though the house be but narrow"—
Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend and they bow;
A ship sails afar over warm ocean-waters,
And haply one musing doth stand at her prow.

Digitized by Google

O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little daughters,
Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall;
A sunshiny world full of laughter and leisure,
And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow and thrall,
Send down on their pleasure smiles passing its measure—
God that is over us all.

SEVEN TIMES FIVE.—WIDOWHOOD.

I SLEEP and rest, my heart makes moan
Before I am well awake;
"Let me bleed! O let me alone,
Since I must not break!"

For children wake, though fathers sleep,
With a stone at foot and at head:
O sleepless God, forever keep,
Keep both living and dead!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see
But a world happy and fair;
I have not wished it to mourn with me—
Comfort is not there.

O what anear but golden brooms,
And a waste of reedy rills;
O what afar but the fine glooms
On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore—
How bitter it is to part!
O to meet thee, my love, once more!—
O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!
O that an echo might wake
And waft one note of thy psalm to me
Ere my heart-strings break!

I should know it how faint soe'er,
And with angel-voices blent;
O once to feel thy spirit anear,
I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold,
While an angel entering trod,
But once—thee sitting to behold
On the hills of God.

SEVEN TIMES SIX.—GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
To see my bright ones disappear,
Drawn up like morning dews—
To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
This have I done when God drew near
Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
And with thy lord depart
In tears that he, as soon as shed,
Will let no longer smart.—
To hear, to heed, to wed,
This while thou didst I smiled,
For now it was not God who said,
"Mother, give ME thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind,
To God I gave with tears,
But when a man like grace would find
My soul put by her fears—
O fond, O fool, and blind,
God guards in happier spheres;
That man will guard where he did bind
Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
Fair lot that maidens choose,
Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
Thy face no more she views,
Thy mother's lot, my dear,
She doth in naught accuse;
Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
To love—and then to lose.

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN.—LONGING FOR HOME.

I.

A SONG of a boat:—
There was once a boat on a billow:
Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
And the foam was white in her wake like snow,
And her frail mast bowed when the breeze would blow,
And bent like a wand of willow.

II.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat
Went courtesying over the billow,
I marked her course till a dancing mote
She faded out on the moonlit foam,
And I stayed behind in the dear-loved home;
And my thoughts all day were about the boat
And my dreams upon the pillow.

III.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
For it is but short:—
My boat, you shall find none fairer afloat,
In river or port.
Long I looked out for the lad she bore,
On the open desolate sea,
And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
For he came not back to me—
Ah me!

IV.

A song of a nest:—
There was once a nest in a hollow,
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,
Soft and warm, and full to the brim;
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
With buttercup-buds to follow.

Digitized by Google

V.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
For it is not long:—
You shall never light in a summer quest
The bushes among—
Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
A fairer nestful, nor ever know
A softer sound than their tender twitter,
That wind-like did come and go.

VI.

I had a nestful once of my own,
Ah happy, happy I!
Right dearly I loved them: but when they were grown
They spread out their wings to fly—
O, one after one they flew away
Far up to the heavenly blue,
To the better country, the upper day,
And—I wish I was going too.

VII.

I pray you, what is the nest to me,
My empty nest?
And what is the shore where I stood to see
My boat sail down to the west?
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
Though my good-man has sailed?
Can I call that home where my nest was set,
Now all its hope hath failed?
Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
And the land were my nestlings be:
There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
The only home for me—
Ah me!

BROTHERS, AND A SERMON.

It was a village built in a green rent,
Between two cliffs that skirt the dangerous bay.

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,
And you may lie on it and look sheer down,
Just where the "Grace of Sunderland" was lost,
And see the elastic banners of the dulse
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish creep
Across the laver, and the mackerel shoot
Over and under it, like silver boats
Turning at will and plying under water.

There on that reef we lay upon our breasts,
My brother and I, and half the village lads,
For an old fisherman had called to us
With "Sirs, the syle be come." "And what are they?"
My brother said. "Good lack!" the old man cried,
And shook his head, "to think you gentlefolk
Should ask what syle be! Look you; I can't say
What syle be called in your fine dictionaries,
Nor what name God Almighty calls them by
When their food 's ready and He sends them south;
But our folk call them syle, and naught but syle,
And when they 're grown, why then we call them herring.
I tell you, sir, the water is as full
Of them as pastures be of blades of grass;
You'll draw a score out in a landing-net,
And none of them be longer than a pin.

"Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly off,
I reckon, and so would God Almighty's gulls,"
He grumbled on in his quaint piety,
"And all His other birds, if He should say
I will not drive my syle into the south;
The fisher folk may do without my syle,
And do without the shoals of fish it draws
To follow and feed on it."
This said, we made
Our peace with him by means of two small coins,
And down we ran and lay upon the reef,
And saw the swimming infants, emerald green,
In separate shoals, the scarcely turning ebb
Bringing them in; while sleek, and not intent
On chase, but taking that which came to hand,
The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet swam
Between; and settling on the polished sea,
A thousand snow-white gulls sat lovingly
In social rings, and twittered while they fed.
The village dogs and ours, elate and brave,
Lay looking over, barking at the fish;
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the bait,
And when they heaved and floundered on the rock,
In beauteous misery, a sudden pat
Some shaggy pop would deal, then back away,
At distance eye them with sagacious doubt,
And shrink half frighted from the slippery things.

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow
Rose high enough to drive us from the reef;
The fisher-lads went home across the sand;
We climbed the cliff and sat an hour or more,
Talking and looking down. It was not talk
Of much significance, except for this—
That we had more in common than of old,
For both were tired, I with overwork,
He with inaction; I was glad at heart
To rest, and he was glad to have an ear
That he could grumble to, and half in jest
Rail at entails, deplore the fate of heirs,
And the misfortune of a good estate—
Misfortune that was sure to pull him down,
Make him a dreamy, selfish, useless man:
Indeed, he felt himself deteriorate
Already. Thereupon he sent down showers
Of clattering stones, to emphasize his words,
And leap the cliffs and tumble noisily
Into the seething wave. And as for me,
I railed at him and at ingratitude,
While rifling of the basket he had slung
Across his shoulders; then with right good-will
We fell to work, and feasted like the gods,
Like laborers, or like eager workhouse folk
At Yuletide dinner; or, to say the whole
At once, like tired, hungry, healthy youth,
Until the meal being o'er, the tilted flask
Drained of its latest drop, the meat and bread
And ruddy cherries eaten, and the dogs
Mumbling the bones, this elder brother of mine,
This man, that never felt an ache or pain
In his broad, well-knit frame, and never knew

Digitized by Google

The trouble of an unforgiven grudge,
The sting of a regretted meanness, nor
The desperate struggle of the unendowed
For place and for possession—he began
To sing a rhyme that he himself had wrought;
Sending it out with cogitative pause,
As if the scene where he had shaped it first
Had rolled it back on him, and meeting it
Thus unaware, he was of doubtful mind
Whether his dignity it well beseemed
To sing of pretty maiden:

Goldilocks sat on the grass,
  Tying up of posies rare,
Hardly could a sunbeam pass
  Through the cloud that was her hair.
Purple orchis lasteth long,
  Primrose flowers are pale and clear;
O the maiden sang a song
  It would do you good to hear!

Sad before her leaned the boy,
  "Goldilocks that I love well,
Happy creature fair and coy,
  Think o' me, sweet Amabel."
Goldilocks she shook apart,
  Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes,
Like a blossom in her heart,
  Opened out her first surprise.

As a gloriole sign o' grace,
  Goldilocks, ah fall and flow,
On the blooming, childlike face,
  Dimple, dimple, come and go.
Give her time; on grass and sky
  Let her gaze if she be fain,
As they looked ere he drew nigh,
  They will never look again.

Ah! the playtime she has known,
  While her goldilocks grew long,
Is it like a nestling flown,
  Childhood over like a song?
Yes, the boy may clear his brow,
  Though she thinks to say him nay,
When she sighs, "I cannot now,
  Come again some other day."

"Hold! there," he cried, half angry with himself,
"That ending goes amiss:" then turned again
To the old argument that we had held:
"Now look you!" said my brother, "you may talk
Till, weary of the talk, I answer 'Ay,
There's reason in your words;' and you may talk
Till I go on to say, 'This should be so;'
And you may talk till I shall further own
'It *is* so; yes, I am a lucky dog!'
Yet not the less shall I next morning wake,
And with a natural and fervent sigh,
Such as you never heaved, I shall exclaim,
'What an unlucky dog I am!'" And here
He broke into a laugh. "But as for you—
You! on all hands you have the best of me;
Men have not robbed *you* of your birthright—work,
Nor ravaged in old days of peaceful field,
Nor wedded heiresses against their will,
Nor sinned, nor slayed, nor stooped, nor overreached,
That you might drone a useless life away,
Mid half a score of bleak and barren farms
And half a dozen bogs."
"O rare!" I cried,
"His wrongs go nigh to make him eloquent;
Now we behold how far bad actions reach!
Because five hundred years ago a Knight
Drove geese and beeves out from a Franklin's yard;
Because three hundred years ago a 'squire—
Against her will, and for her fair estate—
Married a very ugly red-haired maid,
The blest inheritor of all their pelf,
While in the full enjoyment of the same
Sighs on his own confession every day.
He cracks no egg without a moral sigh,
Nor eats of beef, but thinking on that wrong;
Then, yet the more to be revenged on them,
And shame their ancient pride, if they should know,
Works hard as any horse for his degree,
And takes to writing verses."
"Ay," he said,
Half laughing at himself, "yet you and I,
But for those tresses which enrich us yet
With somewhat of the hue that partial fame
Calls auburn when it shines on heads of heirs,
But when it flames round brows of younger sons,
Just red—mere red; why, but for this, I say,
And but for selfish getting of the land,
And beggarly entailing it, we two,
To-day well fed, well grown, well dressed, well read,
We might have been two horny-handed boors—
Lean, clumsy, ignorant, and ragged boors—
Planning for moonlight nights a poaching scheme,
Or soiling our dull souls and consciences
With plans for pilfering a cottage roost.

"What, chorus! are you dumb? you should have cried,
'So good comes out of evil;'" and with that,
As if all pauses it was natural
To seize for songs, his voice broke out again:

Coo, dove, to thy married mate,
  She has two warm eggs in her nest,
Tell her the hours are few to wait
  Ere life shall dawn on their rest;
And thy young shall peck at the shells, elate
  With a dream of her brooding breast.

Coo, dove, for she counts the hours,
  Her fair wings ache for flight:
By day the apple has grown in the flowers,
  And the moon has grown by night;
And the white drift settled from hawthorn bowers,
  Yet they will not seek the light.

Coo, dove; but what of the sky!
  And what if the storm-wind swell,
And the reeling branch come down from on high
  To the grass where daisies dwell,
And the brood belovèd should with them lie,
  Or ever they break the shell?

Coo, dove; and yet black clouds lower,
  Like fate, on the far-off sea;

Digitized by Google

Thunder and wind they bear to thy bower,
As on wings of destiny.
Ah, what if they break in an evil hour,
As they broke over mine and me!

What next?—we started like to girls, for lo!
The creaking voice, more harsh than rusty crane,
Of one who stooped behind us, cried aloud:
"Good lack! how sweet the gentleman does sing—
So loud and sweet, 't is like to split his throat.
Why, Mike 's a child to him, a two years' child—
A Chrisom child."
"Who's Mike?" my brother growled
A little roughly. Quoth the fisherman:
"Mike, sir? he 's just a fisher-lad, no more;
But he can sing, when he takes on to sing,
So loud there 's not a sparrow in the spire
But needs must hear. Sir, if I might make bold,
I 'd ask what song that was you sung. My mate,
As we were shoving off the mackerel-boats,
Said he, 'I 'll wager that 's the sort o' song
They kept their hearts up with in the Crimea.'"

"There, fisherman," quoth I, "he showed his wit,
Your mate; he marked the sound of savage war—
Gunpowder, groans, hot-shot, and bursting shells,
And 'murderous messages,' delivered by
Spent balls that break the heads of dreaming men."

"Ay, ay, sir!" quoth the fishermman. "Have done,"
My brother. And I—"The gift belongs to few
Of sending farther than the words can reach
Their spirit and expresssion;" still—"Have done!"
He cried; and then, "I rolled the rubbish out
More loudly than the meaning warranted,
To air my lungs—I thought not on the words."

Then said the fisherman, who missed the point,
"So Mike rolls out the psalm; you'll hear him, sir,
Please God you live till Sunday."
"Even so:
And you, too, fisherman: for here, they say,
You are all church-goers."
"Surely, sir," quoth he,
Took off his hat and stroked his old white head
And wrinkled face; then sitting by us said,
As one that utters with a quiet mind
Unchallenged truth, "'T is lucky for the boats."

The boats! 't is lucky for the boats! Our eyes
Were drawn to him as either fain would say,
What! do they send the psalm up in the spire,
And pray because 't is lucky for the boats?

But he, the brown old man, the wrinkled man,
That all his life had been a church-goer,
Familiar with celestial cadences,
Informed of all he could receive, and sure
Of all he understood—he sat content,
And we kept silence. In his reverend face
There was a simpleness we could not sound;
Much truth had passed him overhead; some error
He had trod under foot;—God comfort him!
He could not learn of us, for we were young
And he was old, and so we gave it up;
And the sun went into the west, and down
Upon the water stooped an orange cloud,
And the pale milky reaches flushed, as glad
To wear its colors; and the sultry air
Went out to sea, and puffed the sails of ships
With thymy wafts, the breath of trodden grass:
It took moreover music, for across
The heather belt and over pasture-land
Came the sweet monotone of one slow bell,
And parted time into divisions rare,
Whereof each morsel brought its own delight.

"They ring for service," quoth the fisherman;
"Our parson preaches in the church to-night."

"And do the people go?" my brother asked.

"Ay, sir; they count it mean to stay away,
He takes it so to heart. He 's a rare man,
Our parson; half a head above us all."

"That 's a great gift, and notable," said I.

"Ay, sir; and when he was a younger man
He went out in the life-boat very oft,
Before the 'Grace of Sunderland' was wrecked.
He 's never been his own man since that hour;
For there were thirty men aboard of her,
Anigh as close as you are now to me,
And ne'er a one was saved.
They're lying now,
With two small children, in a row: the church
And yard are full of seamen's graves, and few
Have any names.
She bumped upon the reef;
Our parson, my young son, and several more
Were lashed together with a two-inch rope,
And crept along to her; their mates ashore
Ready to haul them in. The gale was high,
The sea was all a boiling, seething froth,
And God Almighty's guns were going off,
And the land trembled.

"When she took the ground,
She went to pieces like a lock of hay
Tossed from a pitchfork. Ere it came to that,
The captain reeled on deck with two small things,
One in each arm—his little lad and lass.
Their hair was long and blew before his face,
Or else we thought he had been saved; he fell,
But held them fast. The crew, poor luckless souls!
The breakers licked them off; and some were crushed,
Some swallowed in the yeast, some flung up dead,
The dear breath beaten out of them: not one
Jumped from the wreck upon the reef to catch
The hands that strained to reach, but tumbled back
With eyes wide open. But the captain lay
And clung—the only man alive. They prayed—
'For God's sake, captain, throw the children here!'
'Throw them!' our parson cried; and then she struck:
And he threw one, a pretty two years' child.

Digitized by Google

But the gale dashed him on the slippery verge,
And down he went. They say they heard him cry.

"Then he rose up and took the other one,
And all our men reached out their hungry arms,
And cried out, 'Throw her, throw her!' and he did—
He threw her right against the parson's breast,
And all at once a sea broke over them,
And they that saw it from the shore have said
It struck the wreck, and piecemeal scattered it,
Just as a woman might the lump of salt
That 'twixt her hands into the kneading-pan
She breaks and crumbles on her rising bread.

"We hauled our men in: two of them were dead—
The sea had beaten them, their heads hung down;
Our parson's arms were empty, for the wave
Had torn away the pretty, pretty lamb;
We often see him stand beside her grave:
But 't was no fault of his, no fault of his.

"I ask your pardon, sirs, I prate and prate,
And never have I said what brought me here:
Sirs, if you want a boat to-morrow morn,
I'm bold to say there's ne'er a boat like mine."

"Ay, that was what we wanted," we replied;
"A boat, his boat;" and off he went, well pleased.

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky
Flushing our faces), and went sauntering on,
And thought to reach our lodging, by the cliff.
And up and down among the heather-beds,
And up and down between the sheaves we sped,
Doubling and winding; for a long ravine
Ran up into the land and cut us off,
Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,
And rent with many a crevice, where the wind
Had laid up drifts of empty egg-shells, swept
From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots.

So as it chanced we lighted on a path
That led into a nutwood; and our talk
Was louder than beseemed, if we had known,
With argument and laughter; for the path,
As we sped onward, took a sudden turn
Abrupt, and we came out on churchyard grass,
And close upon a porch, and face to face
With those within, and with the thirty graves.
We heard the voice of one who preached within,
And stopped. "Come on," my brother whispered me,
"It were more decent that we enter now;
Come on! we'll hear this rare old demigod:
I like strong men and large; I like gray heads,
And grand gruff voices, hoarse though this may be
With shouting in the storm."
It was not hoarse,
The voice that preached to those few fishermen,
And women, nursing mothers with the babes
Hushed on their breasts; and yet it held them not:
Their drowsy eyes were drawn to look at us,
Till, having leaned our rods against the wall,
And left the dogs at watch, we entered, sat,
And were apprized that, though he saw us not,
The parson knew that he had lost the eyes
And ears of those before him, for he made
A pause—a long dead pause, and dropped his arms,
And stood awaiting, till I felt the red
Mount to my brow.
And a soft fluttering stir
Passed over all, and every mother hushed
The babe beneath her shawl, and he turned round
And met our eyes, unused to diffidence,
But diffident of his; then with a sigh
Fronted the folk, lifted his grand gray head,
And said, as one that pondered now the words,
He had been preaching on with new surprise
And found fresh marvel in their sound, "Behold!
Behold!" saith he, "I stand at the door and knock."

Then said the parson: "What! and shall He wait,
And must He wait, not only till we say,
'Good Lord, the house is clean, the hearth is swept,
The children sleep, the mackerel-boats are in,
And all the nets are mended; therefore I
Will slowly to the door and open it,'
But must He also wait where still, behold!
He stands and knocks, while we do say, 'Good Lord,
The gentlefolk are come to worship here,
And I will up and open to Thee soon;
But first I pray a little longer wait,
For I am taken up with them; my eyes
Must needs regard the fashion of their clothes,
And count the gains I think to make by them;
Forsooth they are of much account, good Lord!
Therefore have patience with me—wait, dear Lord!
Or come again?'
What! must He wait for THIS—
For this? Ay, He doth wait for this, and still,
Waiting for this, He, patient, raileth not;
Waiting for this, e'en this He saith, 'Behold!
I stand at the door and knock.'
O patient hand!
Knocking and waiting—knocking in the night
When work is done—I charge you, by the sea,
Whereby you fill your children's mouths, and by
The might of Him that made it—fishermen!
I charge you, mothers, by the mother's milk
He drew, and by His Father, God over all,
Blessèd forever, that ye answer Him,
Open the door with shame, if ye have sinned;
If ye be sorry, open it with sighs.
Albeit the place be bare for poverty,
And comfortless for lack of plenishing,
Be not abashed for that, but open it,
And take Him in that comes to sup with thee;
'Behold!' He saith, 'I stand at the door and knock.'

"Now, hear me: there be troubles in this world
That no man can escape, and there is one
That lieth hard and heavy on my soul,
Concerning that which is to come—
I say
As a man that knows what earthly trouble means,
I will not bear this ONE—I cannot bear

Digitized by Google

This ONE—I cannot bear the weight of you—
You—every one of you, body and soul:
You, with the care you suffer, and the loss
That you sustain; you, with the growing up
To peril, may be with the growing old
To want, unless before I stand with you
At the great white throne I may be free of all,
And utter to the full what shall discharge
Mine obligation: nay, I will not wait
A day, for every time the black clouds rise,
And the gale freshens, still I search my soul
To find if there be aught that can persuade
To good, or aught forsooth that can beguile
From evil, that I (miserable man!
If that be so) have left unsaid, undone.

"So that when any risen from sunken wrecks,
Or rolled in by the billows to the edge
Of the everlasting strand, what time the sea
Gives up her dead, shall meet me, they may say
Never, 'Old man, you told us not of this;
You left us fisher-lads, that had to toil
Ever in danger of the secret stab
Of rocks, far deadlier then the dagger; winds,
Of breath more murderous than the cannon's;
waves,
Mighty to rock us to our death; and gulfs,
Ready beneath to suck and swallow us in:
This crime be on your head; and as for us—
What shall we do?' but rather—nay, not so,
I will not think it; I will leave the dead,
Appealing but to life: I am afraid
Of you, but not so much if you have sinned
As for the doubt if sin shall be forgiven.
The day was, I have been afraid of pride—
Hard man's hard pride; but now I am afraid
Of man's humility. I counsel you,
By the great God's great humbleness, and by
His pity, be not humble over-much.
See! I will show at whose unopened doors
He stands and knocks, that you may never say,
'I am too mean, too ignorant, too lost;
He knocks at other doors, but not at mine.'

"See here! it is the night! it is the night!
And snow lies thickly, white untrodden snow,
And the wan moon upon a casement shines—
A casement crusted o'er with frosty leaves,
That make her ray less bright along the floor.
A woman sits with hands upon her knees,
Poor tired soul! and she has naught to do,
For there is neither fire nor candle-light:
The driftwood ash lies cold upon her hearth;
The rushlight flickered down an hour ago;
Her children wail a little in their sleep
For cold and hunger; and, as if that sound
Was not enough, another comes to her,
Over God's undefilèd snow—a song—
Nay, never hang your heads—I say, a song.

"And doth she curse the alehouse, and the sots
That drink the night out, and their earnings there,
And drink their manly strength and courage
down,
And drink away the little children's bread,
And starve her, starving by the self-same act
Her tender suckling, that with piteous eyes
Looks in her face, till scarcely she has heart
To work, and earn the scanty bit and drop
That feed the others?
Does she curse the song?
I think not, fishermen; I have not heard
Such women curse. God's curse is curse enough.
To-morrow she will say a bitter thing,
Pulling her sleeve down lest the bruises show—
A bitter thing, but meant for an excuse—
'My master is not worse than many men:'
But now, ay, now she sitteth dumb and still;
No food, no comfort, cold and poverty
Bearing her down.
My heart is sore for her;
How long, how long? When troubles come of
God,
When men are frozen out of work, when wives
Are sick, when working fathers fail and die,
When boats go down at sea—then naught be-
hooves
Like patience; but for troubles wrought of men
Patience is hard—I tell you it is hard.

"O thou poor soul! it is the night—the night
Against thy door drifts up the silent snow,
Blocking thy threshold: 'Fall,' thou sayest,
'fall, fall,
Cold snow, and lie and be trod underfoot.
Am not I fallen? wake up and pipe, O wind,
Dull wind, and beat and bluster at my door:
Merciful wind, sing me a hoarse, rough song,
For there is other music made to-night
That I would fain not hear. Wake, thou still
sea,
Heavily plunge. Shoot on, white waterfall.
Oh, I could long like thy cold icicles
Freeze, freeze, and hang upon the frosty clift
And not complain, so I might melt at last
In the warm summer sun, as thou wilt do!

"'But woe is me! I think there is no sun;
My sun is sunken, and the night grows dark:
None care for me. The children cry for bread,
And I have none; and naught can comfort me.
Even if the heavens were free to such as I,
It were not much, for death is long to wait,
And heaven is far to go!'

And speakest thou thus
Despairing of the sun that sets to thee,
And of the earthly love that wanes to thee,
And of the heaven that lieth far from thee?
Peace, peace, fond fool! One draweth near
thy door
Whose footsteps leave no print across the snow;
Thy sun has risen with comfort in his face,
The smile of heaven, to warm thy frozen heart,
And bless with saintly hand. What! is it long
To wait, and far to go? Thou shalt not go;
Behold, across the snow to thee He comes,
Thy heaven descends, and is it long to wait?
Thou shalt not wait: 'This night, this night,'
He saith,
'I stand at the door and knock.'

"It is enough—can such a one be here—
Yea, here? O God forgive you, fishermen!
One! is there only one? But do thou know,
O woman! pale for want if thou art here,
That on thy lot much thought is spent in heaven;
And, coveting the heart a hard man broke,
One standeth patient, watching in the night,
And waiting in the daytime?

Digitized by Google

What shall be
If thou wilt answer? He will smile on thee;
One smile of His shall be enough to heal
The wound of man's neglect; and He will sigh,
Pitying the trouble which that sigh shall cure;
And He will speak—speak in the desolate night;
In the dark night: 'For me a thorny crown
Men wove, and nails were driven in my hands
And feet: there was an earthquake, and I died;
I died, and am alive for evermore.

"'I died for thee; for thee I am alive,
And my humanity doth mourn for thee,
For thou art mine; and all thy little ones,
They, too, are mine, are mine. Behold, the house
Is dark, but there is brightness where the sons
Of God are singing, and, behold, the heart
Is troubled: yet the nations walk in white:
They have forgotten how to weep; and thou
Shalt also come, and I will foster thee
And satisfy thy soul; and thou shalt warm
Thy trembling life beneath the smile of God.
A little while—it is a little while—
A little while, and I will comfort thee;
I go away, but I will come again.'

"But hear me yet. There was a poor old man
Who sat and listened to the raging sea,
And heard it thunder, lunging at the cliffs
As like to tear them down. He lay at night;
And 'Lord have mercy on the lads,' said he,
'That sailed at noon, though they be none of mine;
For when the gale gets up, and when the wind
Flings at the window, when it beats the roof,
And lulls and stops and rouses up again,
And cuts the crest clean off the plunging wave,
And scatters it like feathers up the field,
Why then I think of my two lads: my lads
That would have worked and never let me want,
And never let me take the parish pay.
No, none of mine; my lads were drowned at sea—
My two—before the most of these were born.
I know how sharp that cuts, since my poor wife
Walked up and down, and still walked up and down,
And I walked after, and one could not hear
A word the other said, for wind and sea
That raged and beat and thundered in the night—
The awfullest, the longest, lightest night
That ever parents had to spend. A moon
That shone like daylight on the breaking wave.
Ah, me! and other men have lost their lads,
And other women wiped their poor dead mouths,
And got them home and dried them in the house,
And seen the driftwood lie along the coast,
That was a tidy boat but one day back,
And seen next tide the neighbors gather it
To lay it on their fires.
Ay, I was strong
And able-bodied—loved my work;—but now
I am a useless hull: 't is time I sunk;
I am in all men's way; I trouble them;
I am a trouble to myself: but yet
I feel for mariners of stormy nights,
And feel for wives that watch ashore. Ay, ay,
If I had learning I would pray the Lord
To bring them in: but I 'm no scholar, no;
Book-learning is a world too hard for me:
But I make bold to say, 'O Lord, good Lord,
I am a broken-down poor man, a fool
To speak to Thee: but in the book 't is writ,
As I hear say from others that can read,
How, when Thou camest, Thou didst love the sea,
And live with fisherfolk, whereby 't is sure
Thou knowest all the peril they go through,
And all their trouble.
As for me, good Lord,
I have no boat; I am too old, too old—
My lads are drowned; I buried my poor wife;
My little lasses died so long ago
That mostly I forget what they were like.
Thou knowest, Lord, they were such little ones;
I know they went to Thee, but I forget
Their faces, though I missed them sore.
O Lord,
I was a strong man; I have drawn good food
And made good money out of Thy great sea:
But yet I cried for them at nights; and now,
Although I be so old, I miss my lads,
And there be many folk this stormy night
Heavy with fear for theirs. Merciful Lord,
Comfort them; save their honest boys, their pride,
And let them hear next ebb the blessedest,
Best sound—the boat-keels grating on the sand.

"'I cannot pray with finer words, I know
Nothing; I have no learning, cannot learn—
Too old, too old. They say I want for naught,
I have the parish pay; but I am dull
Of hearing, and the fire scarce warms me through.
God save me, I have been a sinful man,
And save the lives of them that still can work,
For they are good to me; ay, good to me.
But, Lord, I am a trouble! and I sit
And I am lonesome, and the nights are few
That any think to come and draw a chair,
And sit in my poor place and talk a while.
Why should they come, forsooth? Only the wind
Knocks at my door, O long and loud it knocks,
The only thing God made that has a mind
To enter in.'
Yea, thus the old man spake,
These were the last words of his agèd mouth—
But One did knock. One came to sup with him,
That humble, weak, old man; knocked at his door
In the rough pauses of the laboring wind.
I tell you that One knocked while it was dark,
Save where their foaming passion had made white
Those livid seething billows. What He said
In that poor place where He did talk a while,
I cannot tell: but this I am assured,
That when the neighbors came the morrow morn,
What time the wind had bated, and the sun
Shone on the old man's floor, they saw the smile
He passed away in, and they said, 'He looks
As he had woke and seen the face of Christ,
And with that rapturous smile held out his arms
To come to Him!'

"Can such a one be here—
So old, so weak, so ignorant, so frail?

Digitized by Google

The Lord be good to thee, thou poor old man;
It would be hard with thee if heaven were shut
To such as have not learning. Nay, nay, nay,
He condescends to them of low estate;
To such as are despised He cometh down,
Stands at the door and knocks.

"Yet bear with me,
I have a message; I have more to say.
Shall sorrow win His pity, and not sin?
That burden ten times heavier to be borne:
What think you? Shall the virtuous have His care
Alone? O virtuous women, think not scorn,
For you may lift your faces everywhere;
And now that it grows dusk, and I can see
None though they front me straight, I fain would tell
A certain thing to you. I say to *you*—
And if it doth concern you, as methinks
It doth, then surely it concerneth all—
I say that there was once—I say not here—
I say that there was once a castaway,
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly;
Kneeling, and crying with a heart-sick cry
That choked itself in sobs—'Oh my good name,
Oh my good name!' And none did hear her cry!
Nay; and it lightened, and the storm-bolts fell,
And the rain splashed upon the roof, and still
She, storm-tossed as the storming elements!
She cried with an exceeding bitter cry,
'Oh my good name!' And then the thunder-cloud
Stooped low and burst in darkness overhead,
And rolled and rocked her on her knees, and shook
The frail foundations of her dwelling-place.
But she—if any neighbor had come in
(None did): if any neighbor had come in,
They might have seen her crying on her knees,
And sobbing, 'Lost, lost, lost!' beating her breast—
Her breast forever pricked with cruel thorns,
The wounds whereof could neither balm assuage
Nor any patience heal—beating her brow,
Which ached, it had been bent so long to hide
From level eyes, whose meaning was contempt.

"O ye good women, it is hard to leave
The paths of virtue, and return again.
What if this sinner wept, and none of you
Comforted her—and what if she did strive
To mend, and none of you believed her strife,
Nor looked upon her—mark, I do not say,
Though it was hard, you therefore were to blame
That she had aught against you, though your feet
Never drew near her door; but I beseech
Your patience. Once in old Jerusalem
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet,
Kissed them, and washed them with her tears.
What then?
I think that yet our Lord is pitiful:
I think I see the castaway e'en now!
And she is not alone: the heavy rain
Splashes without, and sullen thunder rolls,
But she is lying at the sacred feet
Of One transfigured.
And her tears flow down,
Down to her lips—her lips that kiss the print
Of nails; and love is like to break her heart!
Love and repentance—for it still doth work
Sore in her soul to think, to think that she,
Even she, did pierce the sacred, sacred feet,
And bruise the thorn-crowned head.
O Lord, our Lord,
How great is thy compassion! Come, good Lord,
For we will open. Come this night, good Lord;
Stand at the door and knock.
And is this all—
Trouble, old age and simpleness, and sin?
This all: it might be all some other night.
But this night, if a voice said, 'Give account
Whom hast thou with thee?' then must I reply,
'Young manhood have I, beautiful youth and strength,
Rich with all treasure drawn up from the crypt,
Where lies the learning of the ancient world—
Brave with all thoughts that poets fling upon
The strand of life—as driftweed after storms:
Doubtless familiar with thy mountain-heads,
And the dread purity of Alpine snows,
Doubtless familiar with thy works concealed
For ages from mankind—outlying worlds,
And many moonèd spheres—and thy great store
Of stars, more thick than mealy dust which here
Powders the pale leaves of Auriculas.

"'This do I know, but, Lord, I know not more.

"'Not more concerning them—concerning Thee,
I know thy bounty; where Thou givest much
Standing without, if any call Thee in
Thou givest more'—speak, then, O rich and strong;
Open, O happy young, ere yet the hand
Of Him that knocks, wearied at last, forbear;
The patient foot, its thankless quest, refrain,
The wounded heart for evermore withdraw."

I have heard many speak, but this one man—
So anxious not to go to heaven alone—
This one man I remember, and his look,
Till twilight overshadowed him. He ceased,
And out in darkness with the fisherfolk
We passed and stumbled over mounds of moss,
And heard, but did not see the passing beck.
Ah, graceless heart, would that it could regain
From the dim storehouse of sensations past
The impress full of tender awe, that night,
Which fell on me. It was as if the Christ
Had been drawn down from heaven to track us home,
And any of the footsteps following us
Might have been His.

THE FOUR BRIDGES.

I LOVE this gray old church, the low, long nave,
The ivied chancel and the slender spire;
No less its shadow on each heaving grave,
With growing osier bound, or living brier;
I love those yew-tree trunks, where stand arrayed
So many a deep-cut name of youth and maid.

A simple custom this—I love it well—
A carved betrothal and a pledge of truth;
How many an eve, their linkèd names to spell,
Beneath the yew-trees sat our village youth

Digitized by Google

When work was over, and the new-cut hay
Sent wafts of balm from meadows where it lay.

Ah! many an eve, while I was yet a boy,
Some village hind has beckoned me aside,
And sought mine aid, with shy and awkward joy,
To carve the letters of his rustic bride,
And make them clear to read as graven stone,
Deep in the yew-tree's trunk beside his own.

For none could carve like me, and here they stand,
Fathers and mothers of this present race;
And underscored by some less practised hand,
That fain the story of its line would trace,
With children's names, and number, and the day
When any called to God have passed away.

I look upon them, and I turn aside,
As oft when carving them I did erewhile;
And there I see those wooden bridges wide
That cross the marshy hollow; there the stile
In reeds embedded, and the swelling down,
And the white road toward the distant town.

But those old bridges claim another look.
Our brattling river tumbles through the one;
The second spans a shallow, weedy brook:
Beneath the others, and beneath the sun,
Lie two long stilly pools, and on their breasts
Picture their wooden piles, encased in swallows' nests.

And round about them grows a fringe of reeds,
And then a floating crown of lily-flowers,
And yet within small silver-budded weeds;
But each clear centre evermore embowers
A deeper sky, where, stooping, you may see
The little minnows darting restlessly.

My heart is bitter, lilies, at your sweet;
Why did the dewdrop fringe your chalices?
Why in your beauty are you thus complete,
You silver ships—you floating palaces?
O! if need be, you must allure man's eye,
Yet wherefore blossom here? O why? O why?

Oh! oh! the world is wide, you lily-flowers,
It hath warm forests, cleft by stilly pools,
Where every night bathe crowds of stars; and bowers
Of spicery hang over. Sweet air cools
And shakes the lilies among those stars that lie,
Why are not ye content to reign there? Why?

That chain of bridges, it were hard to tell
How it is linked with all my early joy.
There was a little foot that I loved well,
It danced across them when I was a boy;
There was a careless voice that used to sing;
There was a child, a sweet and happy thing.

Oft through that matted wood of oak and birch
She came from yonder house upon the hill;
She crossed the wooden bridges to the church,
And watched, with village girls, my boasted skill,
But loved to watch the floating lilies best,
Or linger, peering in a swallow's nest;

Linger, and linger, with her wistful eyes
Drawn to the lily-buds that lay so warm
And soft on crimson water; for the skies
Would crimson, and the little cloudlets calm
Would all be flung among the flowers sheer down,
To flush the spaces of their clustering crown.

Till the green rushes—oh, so glossy green—
The rushes, they would whisper, rustle, shake;
And forth on floating gauze, no jewelled Queen
So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies would break,
And hover on the flowers—most aërial things,
With little rainbows flickering on their wings.

Ah! my heart dear! the polished pools lie still,
Like lanes of water reddened by the west,
Till swooping down from yon o'erhanging hill,
The bold marsh-harrier wets her tawny breast;
We scared her oft in childhood from her prey,
And the old eager thoughts rise fresh as yesterday.

To yonder copse by moonlight I did go,
In luxury of mischief, half afraid,
To steal the great owl's brood, her downy snow,
Her screaming imps to seize, the while she preyed
With yellow, cruel eyes, whose radiant glare,
Fell with their mother-rage, I might not dare.

Panting, I lay till her great fanning wings
Troubled the dreams of rock-doves, slumbering nigh,
And she and her fierce mate, like evil things,
Skimmed the dusk fields; then rising with a cry
Of fear, joy, triumph, darted on my prey,
And tore it from the nest and fled away.

But afterward, belated in the wood,
I saw her moping on the rifled tree,
And my heart smote me for her, while I stood
Awakened from my careless reverie;
So white she looked, with moonlight round her shed,
So mother-like, she drooped and hung her head.

O that mine eyes would cheat me! I behold
The godwits running by the water-edge,
The mossy bridges mirrored as of old;
The little curlews creeping from the sedge,
But not the little foot so gaily light—
O that mine eyes would cheat me! that I might.

Would cheat me! I behold the gable-ends—
Those purple pigeons clustering on the cote;
The lane with maples overhung, that bends
Toward her dwelling; the dry grassy moat,
Thick mullions, diamond-latticed, mossed and gray,
And walls banked up with laurel and with bay.

And up behind them yellow fields of corn,
And still ascending countless firry spires,
Dry slopes of hills uncultured, bare, forlorn,
And green in rocky clefts with whins and briers;
Then rich cloud-masses dyed the violet's hue,
With orange sunbeams dropping swiftly through.

Digitized by Google

Ay, I behold all this full easily;
  My soul is jealous of my happier eyes,
And manhood envies youth. Ah, strange to see,
  By looking merely, orange-flooded skies;
Nay, any dewdrop that may near me shine:
But never more the face of Eglantine.

She was my one companion, being herself
  The jewel and adornment of my days,
My life's completeness. Oh, a smiling elf,
  That I do but disparage with my praise,
My playmate; and I loved her dearly and long,
And she loved me, as the tender love the strong.

Ay, but she grew, till on a time there came
  A sudden restless yearning to my heart;
And as we went a-nesting, all for shame
  And shyness, I did hold my peace, and start;
Content departed, comfort shut me out,
And there was nothing left to talk about.

She had but sixteen years, and as for me,
  Four added made my life. This pretty bird,
This fairy bird that I had cherished—she,
  Content, had sung, while I, contented, heard;
The song had ceased; the bird with Nature's art
Had brought a thorn and set it in my heart.

The restless birth of love my soul oppressed,
  I longed and wrestled for a tranquil day,
And warred with that disquiet in my breast
  As one who knows there is a better way;
But turned against myself, I still in vain
Looked for the ancient calm to come again.

My tired soul would to itself confess
  That she deserved a wiser love than mine;
To love more truly were to love her less,
  And for this truth I still awoke to pine;
I had a dim belief that it would be
A better thing for her, a blessed thing for me.

Good hast Thou made them—comforters right sweet;
  Good hast Thou made the world, to mankind lent;
Good are Thy dropping clouds that feed the wheat;
  Good are Thy stars above the firmament.
Take to Thee, take, Thy worship, Thy renown;
The good which Thou hast made doth wear Thy crown.

For, O my God, thy creatures are so frail,
  Thy bountiful creation is so fair,
That, drawn before us like the temple-veil,
  It hides the Holy Place from thought and care,
Giving man's eyes instead its sweeping fold,
Rich as with cherub wings and apples wrought of gold.

Purple and blue and scarlet—shimmering bells
  And rare pomegranates on its broidered rim,
Glorious with chain and fretwork that the swell
  Of incense shakes to music dreamy and dim,
Till on a day comes loss, that God makes gain,
And death and darkness rend the veil in twain.

. . . . . .

Ah, sweetest! my beloved! each outward thing
  Recalls my youth, and is instinct with thee;
Brown wood-owls in the dusk, with noiseless wing,
  Float from yon hanger their haunted tree,
And hoot full softly. Listening, I regain
A flashing thought of thee with their remembered strain.

I will not pine—it is the careless brook,
  These amber sunbeams slanting down the vale;
It is the long tree-shadows, with their look
  Of natural peace, that make my heart to fail
The peace of Nature.—No, I will not pine—
But oh, the contrast 'twixt her face and mine!

And still I changed—I was a boy no more;
My heart was large enough to hold my kind;
And all the world. As hath been oft before
  With youth, I sought, but I could never find
Work hard enough to quiet my self-strife
And use the strength of action-craving life.

She, too, was changed: her bountiful sweet eyes
  Looked out full lovingly on all the world.
Oh, tender as the deeps in yonder skies
  Their beaming! but her rosebud lips were curled
With the soft dimple of a musing smile,
Which kept my gaze, but held me mute the while.

A cast of bees, a slowly-moving wain,
  The scent of bean-flowers wafted up a dell,
Blue pigeons wheeling over fields of grain,
  Or bleat of folded lamb, would please her well,
Or cooing of the early coted dove;—
She sauntering mused of these; I, following, mused of love.

With her two lips, that one the other pressed
  So poutingly with such a tranquil air,
With her two eyes, that on my own would rest
  So dream-like, she denied my silent prayer,
Fronted unuttered words and said them nay,
And smiled down love till it had naught to say.

The words that through mine eyes would clearly shine
  Hovered and hovered on my lips in vain;
If after pause I said but "Eglantine,"
  She raised to me her quiet eyelids twain,
And looked me this reply—look calm, yet bland—
"I shall not know, I will not understand."

Yet she did know my story—knew my life
  Was wrought to hers with bindings many and strong—
That I, like Israel, servèd for a wife,
  And for the love I bare her thought not long,
But only a few days, full quickly told,
My seven years' service strict as his of old.

I must be brief: the twilight shadows grow,
  And steal the rose-bloom genial summer sheds,
And scented wafts of wind that come and go
  Have lifted dew from honeyed clover-heads;
The seven stars shine out above the mill,
The dark delightsome woods lie veiled and still.

Digitized by Google

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins to sing,
And stops, as ill-contented with her note;
Then breaks from out the bush with hurried wing,
Restless and passionate. She tunes her throat,
Laments awhile in wavering trills, and then
Floods with a stream of sweetness all the glen.

The seven stars upon the nearest pool
Lie trembling down betwixt the lily-leaves,
And move like glowworms; wafting breezes cool
Come down along the water, and it heaves
And bubbles in the sedge; while deep and wide
The dim night settles on the country-side.

I know this scene by heart. Oh! once before
I saw the seven stars float to and fro,
And stayed my hurried footsteps by the shore
To mark the starry picture spread below:
Its silence made the tumult in my breast
More audible; its peace revealed my own unrest.

I paused, then hurried on; my heart beat quick;
I crossed the bridges, reached the steep ascent,
And climbed through matted fern and hazels thick;
Then darkling through the close green maples went,
And saw—there felt love's keenest pangs begin—
An oriel-window lighted from within—

I saw—and felt that they were scarcely cares
Which I had known before; I drew more near,
And oh! methought how sore it frets and wears
The soul to part with that it holds so dear;
'T is hard two woven tendrils to untwine,
And I was come to part with Eglantine.

For life was bitter through those words repressed,
And youth was burdened with unspoken vows;
Love unrequited brooded in my breast,
And shrank, at glance, from the belovèd brows;
And three long months, heart-sick, my foot withdrawn,
I had not sought her side by rivulet, copse, or lawn—

Not sought her side, yet busy thought no less
Still followed in her wake, though far behind;
And I, being parted from her loveliness,
Looked at the picture of her in my mind:
I lived alone, I walked with soul oppressed,
And ever sighed for her, and sighed for rest.

Then I had risen to struggle with my heart,
And said: "O heart! the world is fresh and fair,
And I am young; but this thy restless smart
Changes to bitterness the morning air:
I will, I must, these weary fetters break—
I will be free, if only for her sake.

"Oh let me trouble her no more with sighs!
Heart-healing comes by distance, and with time:
Then let me wander, and enrich mine eyes
With the green forests of a softer clime,
Or list by night at sea the wind's low stave
And long monotonous rockings of the wave.

"Through open solitudes, unbounded meads,
Where, wading on breast-high in yellow bloom,
Untamed of man, the shy white llama feeds—
There would I journey and forget my doom;
Or far, oh far as sunrise I would see
The level prairie stretch away from me!

"Or I would sail upon the tropic seas,
Where fathom long the blood-red dulses grow,
Droop from the rock and waver in the breeze,
Lashing the tide to foam; while calm below
The muddy mandrakes throng those waters warm,
And purple, gold, and green, the living blossoms swarm."

So of my father I did win consent,
With importunities repeated long,
To make that duty which had been my bent,
To dig with strangers alien tombs among,
And bound to them through desert leagues to pace,
Or track up rivers to their starting-place.

For this I had done battle and had won,
But not alone to tread Arabian sands,
Measure the shadows of a southern sun,
Or dig out gods in the old Egyptian lands;
But for the dream wherewith I thought to cope—
The grief of love unmated with love's hope.

And now I would set reason in array,
Methought, and fight for freedom manfully,
Till by long absence there would come a day
When this my love would not be pain to me;
But if I knew my rosebud fair and blest,
I should not pine to wear it on my breast.

The days fled on; another week should fling
A foreign shadow on my lengthening way;
Another week, yet nearness did not bring
A braver heart that hard farewell to say.
I let the last day wane, the dusk begin,
Ere I had sought that window lighted from within.

Sinking and sinking, O my heart! my heart!
Will absence heal thee whom its shade doth rend?
I reached the little gate, and soft within
The oriel fell her shadow. She did lend
Her loveliness to me, and let me share
The listless sweetness of those features fair.

Among thick laurels in the gathering gloom,
Heavy for this our parting, I did stand;
Beside her mother in the lighted room,
She sitting leaned her cheek upon her hand;
And as she read, her sweet voice, floating through
The open casement, seemed to mourn me an adieu.

Digitized by Google

Youth! youth! how buoyant are thy hopes; they turn
Like marigolds toward the sunny side.
My hopes were buried in a funeral urn,
And they sprung up like plants and spread them wide;
Though I had schooled and reasoned them away,
They gathered smiling near and prayed a holiday.

Ah, sweetest voice! how pensive were its tones,
And how regretful its unconscious pause!
"Is it for me her heart this sadness owns,
And is our parting of to-night the cause?
Ah, would it might be so!" I thought, and stood
Listening entranced among the underwood.

I thought it would be something worth the pain
Of parting, to look once in those deep eyes,
And take from them an answering look again.
"When Eastern palms," I thought, "about me rise,
If I might carve our names upon the rind,
Betrothed, I would not mourn, though leaving thee behind."

I can be patient, faithful, and most fond
To unacknowledged love; I can be true
To this sweet thraldom, this unequal bond,
This yoke of mine that reaches not to you:
Oh, how much more could costly parting buy,
If not a pledge, one kiss, or, failing that, a sigh!

I listened, and she ceased to read; she turned
Her face toward the laurels where I stood;
Her mother spoke—O wonder! hardly learned;
She said: "There is a rustling in the wood;
Ah, child! if one draw near to bid farewell,
Let not thine eyes an unsought secret tell.

"My daughter, there is nothing held so dear
As love, if only it be hard to win.
The roses that in yonder hedge appear
Outdo our garden-buds which bloom within;
But since the hand may pluck them every day,
Unmarked they bud, bloom, drop, and drift away.

"My daughter, my belovèd, be not you
Like those same roses." O bewildering word!
My heart stood still, a mist obscured my view:
It cleared; still silence. No denial stirred
The lips beloved; but straight as one oppressed,
She kneeling dropped her face upon her mother's breast.

This said, "My daughter, sorrow comes to all;
Our life is checked with shadows manifold:
But woman has this more—she may not call
Her sorrow by its name. Yet love not told,
And only born of absence and by thought,
With thought and absence may return to naught."

And my belovèd lifted up her face,
And moved her lips as if about to speak;
She dropped her lashes with a girlish grace,
And the rich damask mantled in her cheek:
I stood awaiting till she should deny
Her love, or with sweet laughter put it by.

But closer nestling to her mother's heart,
She, blushing, said no word to break my trance,
For I was breathless; and with lips apart
Felt my breast pant and all my pulses dance,
And strove to move, but could not for the weight
Of unbelieving joy, so sudden and so great—

Because she loved me. With a mighty sigh,
Breaking away, I left her on her knees,
And blest the laurel bower, the darkened sky,
The sultry night of August. Through the trees,
Giddy with gladness, to the porch I went,
And hardly found the way for joyful wonderment.

Yet when I entered, saw her mother sit
With both hands cherishing the graceful head,
Smoothing the clustered hair, and parting it
From the fair brow; she, rising, only said,
In the accustomed tone, the accustomed word,
The careless greeting that I always heard;

And she resumed her merry mocking smile,
Though tear-drops on the glistening lashes hung.
O woman! thou wert fashioned to beguile:
So have all sages said, all poets sung.
She spoke of favoring winds and waiting ships,
With smiles of gratulation on her lips!

And then she looked and faltered: I had grown
So suddenly in life and soul a man.
She moved her lips, but could not find a tone
To set her mocking music to; began
One struggle for dominion, raised her eyes,
And straight withdrew them bashful through surprise.

The color over cheek and bosom flushed;
I might have heard the beating of her heart,
But that mine own beat louder; when she blushed,
The hand within mine own I felt to start,
But would not change my pitiless decree
To strive with her for might and mastery.

She looked again, as one that, half afraid,
Would fain be certain of a doubtful thing;
Or one beseeching—"Do not me upbraid!"
And then she trembled like the fluttering
Of timid little birds, and silent stood,
No smile wherewith to mock my hardihood.

She turned, and to an open casement moved
With girlish shyness, mute beneath my gaze,
And I on downcast lashes unreproved
Could look as long as pleased me; while, the rays
Of moonlight round her, she her fair head bent,
In modest silence to my words attent.

How fast the giddy whirling moments flew!
The moon had set; I heard the midnight chime;

Digitized by Google

Hope is more brave than fear, and joy than dread,
And I could wait unmoved the parting-time.
It came; for, by a sudden impulse drawn,
She, risen, stepped out upon the dusky lawn.

A little waxen taper in her hand,
Her feet upon the dry and dewless grass,
She looked like one of the celestial band,
Only that on her cheeks did dawn and pass
Most human blushes; while, the soft light thrown
On vesture pure and white, she seemed yet fairer grown.

Her mother, looking out toward her, sighed,
Then gave her hand in token of farewell,
And with her warning eyes, that seemed to chide,
Scarce suffered that I sought her child, to tell
The story of my life, whose every line
No other burden bore than—Eglantine.

Black thunder-clouds were rising up behind,
The waxen taper burned full steadily;
It seemed as if dark midnight had a mind
To hear what lovers say, and her decree
Had passed for silence, while she, dropped to ground
With raiment floating wide, drank in the sound.

O happiness! thou dost not leave a trace
So well defined as sorrow. Amber light,
Shed like a glory on her angel-face,
I can remember fully, and the sight
Of her fair forehead and her shining eyes,
And lips that smiled in sweet and girlish wise.

I can remember how the taper played
Over her small hands, and her vesture white;
How it struck up into the trees, and laid
Upon their under leaves unwonted light;
And when she held it low, how far it spread
O'er velvet pansies slumbering on their bed.

I can remember that we spoke full low,
That neither doubted of the other's truth;
And that with footsteps slower and more slow,
Hands folded close for love, eyes wet for ruth:
Beneath the trees, by that clear taper's flame,
We wandered till the gate of parting came.

But I forget the parting words she said,
So much they thrilled the all-attentive soul;
For one short moment human heart and head
May bear such bliss—its present is the whole:
I had that present, till in whispers fell
With parting gesture her subdued farewell.

Farewell! she said, in act to turn away,
But stood a moment still to dry her tears,
And suffered my enfolding arm to stay
The time of her departure. O ye years!
That intervene betwixt that day and this,
You all received your hue from that keen pain and bliss.

O mingled pain and bliss! O pain to break
At once from happiness so lately found,
And four long years to feel for her sweet sake
The incompleteness of all sight and sound!
But bliss to cross once more the foaming brine—
O bliss, to come again, and make her mine!

I cannot—oh, I cannot more recall!
But I will soothe my troubled thoughts to rest
With musing over journeyings wide, and all
Observance of this active humored West,
And swarming cities steeped in Eastern day,
With swarthy tribes in gold and striped array.

I turn away from these, and straight arise
(Shifting and changing at the restless will);
Imbedded in some deep Circassian mead,
White wagon-tilts, and flocks that eat their fill
Unseen above, while comely shepherds pass,
And scarcely show their heads above the grass.

—The red Sahara in an angry glow,
With amber fogs, across its hollows trailed
Long strings of camels, gloomy-eyed and slow,
And women on their necks from gazers veiled,
And sun-swart guides who toil across the sand
To groves of date-trees on the watered land.

Again—the brown sails of an Arab boat,
Flapping by night upon a glassy sea,
Whereon the moon and planets seem to float,
More bright of hue than they were wont to be,
While shooting-stars rain down with crackling sound,
And, thick as swarming locusts, drop to ground.

Or far into the heat among the sands
The gembok nations, snuffing up the wind,
Drawn by the scent of water—and the bands
Of tawny-bearded lions pacing, blind
With the sun-dazzle in their midst, oppressed
With prey, and spiritless for lack of rest!

What more? Old Lebanon, the frosty-browed,
Setting his feet among oil-olive trees,
Heaving his bare brown shoulder through a cloud;
And after, grassy Carmel, purple seas,
Flattering his dreams and echoing in his rocks,
To multiply the bleating of his flocks.

Enough: how vain this thinking to beguile,
With recollected scenes, an aching breast!
Did not I, journeying, muse on her the while?
Ah, yes! for every landscape comes impressed,
Ay, written on, as by an iron pen,
With the same thought I nursed about her then.

Therefore let memory turn again to home;
Feel, as of old, the joy of drawing near;
Watch the green breakers and the wind-tossed foam,
And see the land-fog break, dissolve, and clear;
Then think a skylark's voice far sweeter sound
Than ever thrilled, but over English ground.

And walk, glad, even to tears, among the wheat,
Not doubting this to be the first of lands;
And while in foreign words this murmuring, meet
Some little village school-girls (with their hands
Full of forget-me-nots), who, greeting me,
I count their English talk delightsome melody

Digitized by Google

And seat me on a bank, and draw them near,
That I may feast myself with hearing it,
Till shortly they forget their bashful fear,
Push back their flaxen curls, and round me sit—
Tell me their names, their daily tasks, and show
Where wild wood-strawberries in the copses grow.

So passed the day in this delightful land:
My heart was thankful for the English tongue,
For English sky with feathery cloudlets spanned,
For English hedge with glistening dewdrops hung.
I journeyed, and at glowing eventide
Stopped at a rustic inn by the wayside.

That night I slumbered sweetly, being right glad
To miss the flapping of the shrouds; but lo!
A quiet dream of beings twain I had,
Behind the curtain talking soft and low:
Methought I did not heed their utterance fine,
Till one of them said, softly, "Eglantine."

I started up awake; 't was silence all:
My own fond heart had shaped that utterance clear;
And "Ah!" methought, "how sweetly did it fall,
Though but in dream, upon the listening ear!
How sweet from other lips the name well known,
That name, so many a year heard only from mine own!"

I thought awhile, then slumber came to me,
And tangled all my fancy in her maze,
And I was drifting on a raft at sea,
The near all ocean, and the far all haze;
Through the white polished water sharks did glide,
And up in heaven I saw no stars to guide.

"Have mercy, God!" but lo! my raft uprose;
Drip, drip, I heard the water splash from her;
My raft had wings, and, as the petrel goes,
She skimmed the sea, then brooding seemed to sit
The milk-white mirror, till, with sudden spring,
She flew straight upward like a living thing;

But strange!—I went not with her in her flight,
For I was entering at a cavern's mouth;
Trees grew within, and screaming birds of night
Sat on them, hiding from the torrid south.
On, on I went, while gleaming in the dark
Those trees with blanchèd leaves stood pale and stark.

The trees had flower-buds, nourished in deep night,
And suddenly, as I went farther in,
They opened, and they shot out lambent light;
Then all at once arose a railing din
That frighted me: "It is the ghosts," I said,
"And they are railing for their darkness fled.

"I hope they will not look me in the face;
It frighteth me to hear their laughter loud;"
I saw them troop before with jaunty pace,
And one would shake off dust that soiled her shroud:
But now, O joy! unhoped to calm my dread,
Some moonlight filtered through a clift o'erhead.

I climbed the lofty trees—the blanchèd trees—
The cleft was wide enough to let me through;
I clambered out and felt the balmy breeze,
And stepped on churchyard grasses wet with dew.
O happy chance! O fortune to admire!
I stood beside my own loved village spire.

And as I gazed upon the yew-tree's trunk,
Lo, far-off music—music in the night!
So sweet and tender as it swelled and sunk,
It charmed me till I wept with keen delight;
And in my dream, methought, as it drew near,
The very clouds in heaven stooped low to hear.

Beat high, beat low, wild heart so deeply stirred,
For high as heaven runs up the piercing strain;
The restless music fluttering like a bird
Bemoaned herself, and dropped to earth again,
Heaping up sweetness, till I was afraid
That I should die of grief when it did fade.

And it DID fade; but while with eager ear
I drank its last long echo dying away,
I was aware of footsteps that drew near,
And round the ivied chancel seemed to stray;
Oh, soft above the hallowed place they trod—
Soft as the fall of foot that is not shod.

I turned—'t was even so—yes, Eglantine!
For at the first I had divined the same;
I saw the moon on her shut eyelids shine,
And said, "She is asleep:" still on she came;
Then on her dimpled feet I saw it gleam,
And thought, "I know that this is but a dream."

My darling! O my darling! not the less
My dream went on because I knew it such;
She came towards me in her loveliness—
A thing too pure, methought, for mortal touch;
The rippling gold did on her bosom meet,
The long white robe descended to her feet.

The fringèd lids dropped low, as sleep-oppressed;
Her dreamy smile was very fair to see,
And her two hands were folded to her breast,
With somewhat held between them heedfully.
Oh, fast asleep! and yet methought she knew
And felt my nearness those shut eyelids through.

She sighed: my tears ran down for tenderness—
"And have I drawn thee to me in my sleep?
Is it for me thou wanderest shelterless,
Wetting thy steps in dewy grasses deep?
Oh, if this be!" I said—"yet speak to me;
I blame my very dream for cruelty."

Then from her stainless bosom she did take
Two beauteous lily flowers that lay therein,
And with slow-moving lips a gesture make,
As one that some forgotten words doth win:
"They floated on the pool," methought she said,
And water trickled from each lily's head

It dropped upon her feet; I saw it gleam
Along the ripples of her yellow hair,

Digitized by Google

And stood apart, for only in a dream
She would have come, methought, to meet me there.
She spoke again—"Ah, fair! ah, fresh they shine!
And there are many left, but these are mine."

I answered her with flattering accents meet:
"Love, they are whitest lilies e'er were blown."
"And sayest thou so?" she sighed in murmurs sweet;
"I have naught else to give thee now, mine own!
For it is night. Then take them, love!" said she;
"They have been costly flowers to thee—and me."

While thus she said, I took them from her hand,
And, overcome with love and nearness, woke;
And overcome with ruth that she should stand
Barefooted in the grass; that when she spoke,
Her mystic words should take so sweet a tone,
And of all names her lips should choose "my own."

I rose, I journeyed, neared my home, and soon
Beheld the spire peer out above the hill.
It was a sunny harvest afternoon,
When, by the churchyard-wicket standing still,
I cast my eager eyes abroad to know
If change had touched the scenes of long ago.

I looked across the hollow; sunbeams shone
Upon the old house with the gable-ends:
"Save that the laurel-trees are taller grown,
No change," methought, "to its gray wall extends.
What clear bright beams on yonder lattice shine!
There did I some time talk with Eglantine."

There, standing with my very goal in sight,
Over my haste did sudden quiet steal;
I thought to dally with my own delight,
Nor rush on headlong to my garnered weal,
But taste the sweetness of a short delay,
And for a little moment hold the bliss at bay.

The church was open; it perchance might be
That there to offer thanks I might essay,
Or rather, as I think, that I might see
The place where Eglantine was wont to pray.
But so it was; I crossed that portal wide,
And felt my riot joy to calm subside.

The low depending curtains gently swayed,
Cast over arch and roof a crimson glow;
But, ne'ertheless, all silence and all shade
It seemed, save only for the rippling flow
Of their long foldings, when the sunset air
Sighed through the casements of the house of prayer.

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,
Where in her childhood I had seen her sit,
Most saint-like and most tranquil there of all,
Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit,
A heavenly vision, had before her strayed
Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger laid.

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,
And took it in my hand, and felt more near
In fancy to her, finding it most sweet
To think how very oft, low kneeling there
In her devout thoughts she had let me share,
And set my graceless name in her pure prayer.

My eyes were dazzled with delightful tears—
In sooth, they were the last I ever shed,
For with them fell the cherished dreams of years.
I looked, and on the wall above my head,
Over her seat, there was a tablet placed,
With one word only on the marble traced.

Ah, well! I would not overstate that woe,
For I have had some blessings, little care;
But since the falling of that heavy blow,
God's earth has never seemed to me so fair,
Nor any of his creatures so divine,
Nor sleep so sweet. The word was, EGLANTINE.

A MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF HER CHILD.

LIVING child or pictured cherub
Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace;
And the mother, moving nearer,
Looked it calmly in the face;
Then, with slight and quiet gesture,
And with lips that scarcely smiled,
Said, "A portrait of my daughter,
When she was a child."

Easy thought was hers to fathom,
Nothing hard her glance to read,
For it seemed to say, "No praises
For this little child I need:
If you see, I see far better,
And I will not feign to care
For a stranger's prompt assurance
That the face is fair."

Softly clasped and half extended,
She her dimpled hands doth lay;
So they doubtless placed them, saying,
"Little one, you must not play."
And while yet his work was growing,
This the painter's hand hath shown,
That the little heart was making
Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley,
Vale of childhood, where you dwell?
Is it calm in that green valley,
Round whose bournes such great hills swell?
Are there giants in the valley—
Giants leaving footprints yet?
Are there angels in the valley?
Tell me—I forget.

Answer, answer, for the lilies,
Little one, o'ertop you much,
And the mealy gold within them
You can scarcely reach to touch.
Oh, how far their aspect differs,
Looking up and looking down!
You look up in that green valley—
Valley of renown!

Digitized by Google

Are there voices in the valley,
  Lying near the heavenly gate?
When it opens, do the harp-strings,
  Touched within, reverberate?
When, like shooting-stars, the angels
  To your couch at nightfall go,
Are their swift wings heard to rustle?
    Tell me, for you know.

Yes, you know—and you are silent;
  Not a word shall asking win;
Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,
  Fast it locks the secret in.
Not a glimpse upon your present
  You unfold to glad my view;
Ah, what secrets of your future
    I could tell to you!

Sunny present! thus I read it,
  By remembrance of my past;
Its to-day and its to-morrow
  Are as lifetimes vague and vast;
And each face in that green valley
  Takes for you an aspect mild,
And each voice grows soft in saying,
    "Kiss me, little child!"

As a boon the kiss is granted:
  Baby mouth, your touch is sweet;
Takes the love without the trouble
  From those lips that with it meet;
Gives the love—O pure! O tender!—
  Of the valley where it grows,
But the baby heart receiveth
    MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present:
  "Ah!" she saith, "too blithe of mood;
Why that smile which seems to whisper,
  'I am happy—God is good!'
God is good: that truth eternal,
  Sown for you in happier years,
I must tend it in my shadow,
    Water it with tears.

"Ah, sweet present! I must lead thee
  By a daylight more subdued;
There must teach thee low to whisper,
  'I am mournful, God is good!'
Peace, thou future; clouds are coming,
  Stooping from the mountain's crest;
But that sunshine floods the valley:
    Let her—let her rest."

Comes the future to the present:
  "Child," she saith, "and wilt thou rest?
How long, child, before thy footsteps
  Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?
Ah, the valley!—angels guard it,
  But the heights are brave to see;
Looking down were long contentment:
    Come up, child, to me."

So she speaks, but do not heed her,
  Little maid, with wondrous eyes,
Not afraid, but clear and tender,
  Blue, and filled with prophecies;
Thou for whom life's veil unlifted
  Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,
Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth,
    Climb, but heights are cold.

There are buds that fold within them,
  Closed and covered from our sight,
Many a richly-tinted petal,
  Never looked on by the light;
Fain to see their shrouded faces,
  Sun and dew are long at strife,
Till at length the sweet buds open—
    Such a bud is life.

When the rose of thine own being
  Shall reveal its central fold,
Thou shalt look within and marvel,
  Fearing what thine eyes behold;
What it shows and what it teaches
  Are not things wherewith to part;
Thorny rose! that always costeth
    Beatings at the heart.

Look in fear, for there is dimness;
  Ills unshapen float anigh;
Look in awe, for this same nature
  Once the Godhead deigned to die.
Look in love, for He doth love it,
  And its tale is best of lore,
Still humanity grows dearer,
    Being learned the more.

Learn, but not the less bethink thee
  How that all can mingle tears;
But his joy can none discover,
  Save to them that are his peers.
And that they whose lips do utter
  Language such as bards have sung;
Lo! their speech shall be to many
    As an unknown tongue.

Learn, that if to thee the meaning
  Of all other eyes be shown,
Fewer eyes can ever front thee,
  That are skilled to read thine own;
And that if thy love's deep current
  Many another's far outflows,
Then thy heart must take forever
    LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

Digitized by Google

ANNA LÆTITIA WARING.

ANNA LÆTITIA WARING was born at Neath, South Wales, about 1830. She published a small volume of devotional poems, entitled "Hymns and Meditations," in 1850, of which a new and enlarged edition appeared in 1860. It has enjoyed a wide and deserved popularity in England, and was republished in the United States, with an introduction by Rt. Rev. F. D. Huntington, D. D., Bishop of Central New York, in 1863.

HYMNS AND MEDITATIONS.

I.

"My times are in thy hands."—PSALM xxxi. 15.

FATHER, I know that all my life
  Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that are sure to come,
  I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind
  Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
  Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
  And to wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
  To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
  That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
  Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
  And guided where I go.

Wherever in the world I am,
  In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
  To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do
  For the Lord on whom I wait.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength,
  To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life
  While keeping at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
  If Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask,
  In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
  With grateful love to Thee:
More careful, not to serve Thee much,
  But to please Thee perfectly.

There are briers besetting every path,
  That call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
  And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
  Is happy anywhere.

In a service which Thy will appoints,
  There are no bonds for me;
For my inmost heart is taught "the truth"
  That makes Thy children "free;"
And a life of self-renouncing love,
  Is a life of liberty.

II.

"Thou maintainest my lot."—PSALM xvi. 5.

SOURCE of my life's refreshing springs,
  Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
  Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

If loving hearts were never lonely,
  If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
  They might be glad, but not in Thee.

Well may Thy own beloved, who see
  In all their lot their Father's pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
  Their living, everlasting treasure.

Well may Thy happy children cease
  From restless wishes prone to sin,
And, in Thy own exceeding peace,
  Yield to Thy daily discipline.

We need as much the cross we bear,
  As air we breathe, as light we see;
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
  It binds us to our strength in Thee.

Digitized by Google

III.

"I, even I, am He that comforteth you."—ISAIAH li. 12.

SWEET is the solace of Thy love,
My heavenly Friend, to me,
While through the hidden way of faith
I journey home with Thee,
Learning by quiet thankfulness
As a dear child to be.

Though from the shadow of Thy peace
My feet would often stray,
Thy mercy follows all my steps,
And will not turn away:
Yea, thou wilt comfort me at last,
As none beneath Thee may.

Oft, in a dark and lonely place,
I hush my hastened breath,
To hear the comfortable words
Thy loving Spirit saith;
And feel my safety in Thy hand
From every kind of death.

Oh, there is nothing in the world
To weigh against Thy will;
E'en the dark times I dread the most,
Thy covenant fulfil;
And when the pleasant morning dawns,
I find Thee with me still.

Then, in the secret of my soul,
Though hosts my peace invade,
Though through a waste and weary land
My lonely way be made,
Thou, even Thou, wilt comfort me:
I need not be afraid.

Still in the solitary place
I would awhile abide,
Till with the solace of Thy love
My heart is satisfied,
And all my hopes of happiness
Stay calmly at Thy side.

IV.

"The Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."—EXODUS xx. 11.

BEAM on us brightly, blessed day;
Dawn softly for our Saviour's sake,
And waft thy sweetness o'er our way,
To draw us heavenward when we wake.

O holy life that shall not end—
Light that will never cease to be—
May every Sabbath-day we spend,
Add to our happiness in Thee.

V.

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance."—PSALM xvi. 5.

THOUGH some good things of lower worth
My heart is called on to resign,
Of all the gifts in heaven and earth,
The greatest and the best is mine:
The love of God in Christ made known—
The love that is enough alone—
My Father's love, is all my own.

My soul's Restorer, let me learn
In that deep love to live and rest;
Let me the precious thing discern,
Of which I am indeed possessed.
My treasure let me feel and see,
And let my moments, as they flee,
Unfold my endless life in Thee.

Let me not dwell so much within
My bounded heart with anxious heed—
Where all my searches meet with sin,
And nothing satisfies my need:
It shuts me from the sound and sight
Of that pure world of life and light,
Which has no breadth, or length, or height.

Let me Thy power, Thy beauty see;
So shall the hopeless labor cease,
And my free heart shall follow Thee
Through paths of everlasting peace.
My strength Thy gift, my life Thy care,
I shall forget to seek elsewhere
The wealth to which my soul is heir.

I was not called to walk alone—
To clothe *myself* with love and light;
And for Thy glory, not my own,
My soul is precious in Thy sight.
My evil heart can never be
A home, a heritage for me—
But Thou canst make it fit for Thee.

VI.

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—PROV. xviii. 24.

WOULD that I were more closely bound
To my Beloved, who ever lives!
Would that my soul were always found
Abiding in the peace He gives!
Would that I might more clearly see
His love an heritage for me—
More surely know, more meekly own,
His bounteous grace my strength alone!

And much I wish—but I will pray
For wisdom that the lowly find;
And, O my Saviour, every day,
More of Thy meek and quiet mind.
The comfort of a mind at rest
From every care Thou hast not blest;
A heart from all the world set free,
To worship and to wait on Thee.

Ah! my Beloved, who wilt not die,
Whose spirit does not change with mine,
Put doubts of my affection by,
And make me free to sing of Thine.
The more Thy goodness I confess,
I shall not surely love Thee less;
The more myself alone I see,
The farther off I feel from Thee.

Thou art my life's restoring rest;
In Thee for safety let me hide;

Digitized by Google

And win me for Thy grateful guest
By love that will not be denied.
Try me with Thy refining fire;
Array me in Thy white attire;
Be wisdom, righteousness to me;
The river of my pleasures be,
And fill my life with love to Thee.

VII.

"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee."—PSALM lxxxvi. 5.

MY Saviour, whose infinite grace
Most kindly encompasses me,
Whose goodness more brightly I trace,
The more of my life that I see—
The sins that I mournfully own,
Thy meekness and mercy exalt;
And sweet is the voice from Thy throne,
That tenderly shows me a fault.

Even now, while my praises arise,
A sorrowful spirit is mine—
A spirit Thou wilt not despise,
For, oh! it is mourning with Thine.
My joy is in light from above,
The light which Thy kindness displays;
My grief is for lack of the love
That would tune my whole life to Thy praise.

My faithful Redeemer, forgive
The sin it has grieved Thee to see,
And let me remember to live
In the Spirit that glorifies Thee.
Though much in Thy child Thou hast borne,
Thy counsels still gently repeat,
And give me, if still I must mourn,
To mourn as a child at Thy feet.

VIII.

A NEW-YEAR'S MORNING SONG.

"He hath put a new song in my mouth, even thanksgiving unto our God."—PSALM xl. 3.

THANKSGIVING and the voice of melody,
This new-year's morning call me from my sleep;
A new, sweet song is in my heart for Thee,
Thou faithful, tender Shepherd of the sheep;
Thou knowest where to find and how to keep
The feeble feet that tremble where they stray:
O'er the dark mountains, through the whelming deep,
Thy everlasting mercy makes its way.

The past is not so dark as once it seemed,
For there Thy footprints now distinct I see;
And seed in weakness sown, from death redeemed,
Is springing up, and bearing fruit in Thee.
Not all that hath been, Lord, henceforth shall be;
A low, sweet, cheering strain is in mine ear:
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody
Are leading in, from Heaven, a blest new year.

With voice subdued my listening spirit sings,
As backward on the trodden path I gaze,
While ministering angels fold their wings,
To fill with lowly thoughts my song of praise.
The shadow of the past on future days
Will make them clear to my instructed sight;
For the heart's knowledge of Thy sacred ways,
Even in its deepest, darkest shades, is light.

I am not stronger, yet I do not fear
The present pain, the conflict yet to be;
Experience is a kind voice in mine ear,
And all my failures bid me lean on Thee.
No future suffering can seem strange to me,
While in the hidden part I feel and know
The wisdom of a child at rest, and free
In the tried love whose judgment keeps him low.

Thanksgiving and the voice of melody!
Oh, to my tranquil heart how sweet the strain!
Father of mercies, it arose in Thee,
And to Thy bosom it returns again.
There let my grateful song, my soul, remain,
Calm in the risen Saviour's tender care;
And welcome any trial, any pain,
That serves to keep Thy faithful children there.

Thoughts of Thy love—and oh, how great the sum!
Enduring grief, obtaining bliss for me
The world, life, death, things present, things to come,
All swell the new-year's opening melody.
Past, present, future, all things worship Thee;
And I, through all, with trembling joy behold,
While mountains fall, and treacherous visions flee,
Thy wandering sheep returning to the fold.

IX.

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever."—PSALM xxx. 11, 12.

STRENGTH of the still secluded thought,
That fears, yet longs, its joy to show—
The hope, the awe, in mercy taught
To make me strong, to keep me low;
Now shall my girded heart rejoice,
In praise poured out, in love expressed;
Now will I bless Thee, with a voice
That shall not break this sacred rest.

Once, moved by every mortal pain,
By every pleasure quickly past,
I feared to speak in joyful strain
Of hidden life that might not last.
Now, from a well that will not fail,
In Thee my deep rejoicing springs;
Now, from Thy rest within the veil,
My spirit looks on passing things.

Once, with Thy tired ones homeward bent,
In hope that rose their fears above,
My leaping heart could be content
To greet them with a silent love;
I, too, had walked with weary feet,
And heard the exulting shout too near;
I, too, had felt the toil and heat,
The wind and storm I did not fear.

Perhaps the heavenward look in store,
The speechless prayer for strength or rest,

Digitized by Google

Might help those needy spirits more
  Than hope set forth, or joy expressed.
But I was changed, I knew not how,
  By the same love that chose their ways;
I might be just as weary now,
  And yet rejoice to hear Thy praise.

Now would I cheer the faint in heart
  With sound of joy they too shall see;
Now would I put the fear apart,
  That bids me hide Thy strength in me.
What though the mortal flesh be frail,
  The willing spirit prone to sink—
There is a stream in Baca's vale,
  Whereof Thy feeblest child may drink.

Some, in their sorrow, may not know
  How near their feet those waters glide—
How peaceful fruits for healing grow,
  And flowers for beauty by their side.
They may not see, with weeping eyes
  Upon the dreary desert bent,
How glorious, straight before them, lies
  The Eden of their soul's content.

But, O my Saviour, I can see
  For them, what once for me was seen;
I know, whate'er their sufferings be,
  The tender mercy which they mean.
I do not watch, with anxious care,
  To see the end of their distress;
Thou knowest what the heart must bear—
  The human heart which Thou wilt bless.

And in their daily deepening need
  Of heavenly love, for strength or rest,
They are already blest indeed—
  Yea, and much more they shall be blest.
Wrapt in the spirit of Thy praise,
  As from Gerizim's height, I see
Blessing poured out on all the ways
  That prove Thy children's need of Thee.

Oh, wondrous love, so strong to smite—
  So meek the opposing will to tame!
It was Thy hand, put forth in might,
  That led me through the flood, the flame.
When, needing strength to bear Thy rod,
  By the smooth stream I found repose,
It was Thy grace, All-seeing God,
  Thy love that smote me, ere I rose.

How could I look for lengthened rest,
  With Thy deep sufferings scarcely known,
Or lay forever on Thy breast
  The perfect heart which Thou wilt own?—
The heart, that, guilty of Thy woes,
  Looks only upon Thee to mourn,
And feels the cross Thy love bestows,
  A burden easy to be borne.

And yet that pause was not in vain—
  It was a blessing meet to give
Strength, for the labor and the pain,
  Whereby alone my soul might live.
How gently thence Thy mighty hand
  My lingering spirit onward bare!
How precious, in a barren land,
  The footsteps of Thy people were!

There many hearts that knew Thy ways
  The safety of my soul could see;
And there I heard the song of praise,
  That Faith poured out to Heaven for me.
Oh, more than all the ease I sought,
  That song the desert path could bless;
And dearer in my deepest thought,
  The love that met me in distress.

Now that Thy mercies on my head
  The oil of joy for mourning pour,
Not as I will, my steps be led,
  But as Thou wilt, for evermore.
Henceforth, whate'er my heart's desire,
  Fulfil in me Thy own design;
I need the fountain and the fire—
  And both, O King of Saints, are Thine.

Now that my sense of rest in Thee
  Rules over every rising fear,
Pain, pleasure, all I feel and see,
  Thy counsels to my soul endear.
Now can my girded heart rejoice,
  In praise poured out, in love expressed;
Now may I bless Thee, with a voice
  That shall not break this sacred rest.

X.

"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him."—LAMENTATIONS iii. 24.

My heart is resting, O my God!
  I will give thanks and sing;
My heart is at the secret source
  Of every precious thing.
Now the frail vessel Thou hast made
  No hand but thine shall fill;
For the waters of the earth have failed,
  And I am thirsty still.

I thirst for springs of heavenly life,
  And here all day they rise;
I seek the treasure of Thy love,
  And close at hand it lies:
And a new song is in my mouth,
  To long-loved music set.
Glory to Thee for all the grace
  I have not tasted yet!

Glory to Thee for strength withheld,
  For want and weakness known,
And the fear that sends me to Thy breast
  For what is most my own.
I have a heritage of joy
  That yet I must not see;
But the hand that bled to make it mine,
  Is keeping it for me.

There is a certainty of love
  That sets my heart at rest—
A calm assurance for to-day,
  That to be poor is best—
A prayer reposing on His truth
  Who hath made all things mine,
That draws my captive will to Him,
  And makes it one with Thine.

I will give thanks for suffering now,
  For want and toil and loss—

Digitized by Google

For the death that sin makes hard and slow,
  Upon my Saviour's cross;
Thanks for the little spring of love
  That gives me strength to say,
If they will leave me part in Him,
  Let all things pass away.

Sometimes I long for promised bliss,
  But it will not come too late;
And the songs of patient spirits rise
  From the place wherein I wait;
While, in the faith that makes no haste,
  My soul has time to see
A kneeling host of Thy redeemed
  In fellowship with me.

There is a multitude around
  Responsive to my prayer;
I hear the voice of my desire
  Resounding everywhere:
But the earnest of eternal joy
  In every prayer I trace;
I see the glory of the Lord
  On every chastened face.

How oft, in still communion known,
  Those spirits have been sent
To share the travail of my soul,
  Or show me what it meant!
And I long to do some work of love
  No spoiling hand could touch,
For the poor and suffering of Thy flock
  Who comfort me so much.

But the yearning thought is mingled now
  With the thankful song I sing;
For Thy people know the secret source
  Of every precious thing.
The heart that ministers for Thee,
  In Thy own work will rest;
And the subject spirit of a child
  Can serve Thy children best.

Mine be the reverent, listening love,
  That waits all day on Thee,
With the service of a watchful heart
  Which no one else can see—
The faith that, in a hidden way
  No other eye may know,
Finds all its daily work prepared,
  And loves to have it so.

My heart is resting, O my God!
  My heart is in Thy care;
I hear the voice of joy and health
  Resounding everywhere.
"Thou art my portion," saith my soul—
  Ten thousand voices say,
And the music of their glad "Amen"
  Will never die away.

XI.

"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy water-spouts; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."—PSALM xlii. 7, 8.

Go not far from me, O my strength,
  Whom all my times obey;
Take from me anything Thou wilt,
  But go not Thou away;
And let the storm that does Thy work
  Deal with me as it may.

On Thy compassion I repose,
  In weakness and distress:
I will not ask for greater ease,
  Lest I should love Thee less.
Oh, 't is a blessed thing for me
  To need Thy tenderness.

While many sympathizing hearts
  For my deliverance care,
Thou, in Thy wiser, stronger love,
  Art teaching me to bear—
By the sweet voice of thankful song,
  And calm, confiding prayer.

Thy love has many a lighted path
  No outward eye can trace,
And my heart sees Thee in the deep,
  With darkness on its face,
And communes with Thee, 'mid the storm,
  As in a secret place.

O Comforter of God's redeemed,
  Whom the world does not see,
What hand should pluck me from the flood
  That casts my soul on Thee?
Who would not suffer pain like mine,
  To be consoled like me?

When I am feeble as a child,
  And flesh and heart give way,
Then on Thy everlasting strength,
  With passive trust I stay.
And the rough wind becomes a song,
  The darkness shines like day.

Oh, blessed are the eyes that see,
  Though silent anguish show,
The love that in their hours of sleep.
  Unthanked may come and go;
And blessed are the ears that hear
  Though kept awake by woe.

Happy are they that learn, in Thee,
  Though patient suffering teach,
The secret of enduring strength,
  And praise too deep for speech—
Peace that no pressure from without,
  No strife within, can reach.

There is no death for me to fear,
  For Christ, my Lord, hath died;
There is no curse in this my pain,
  For He was crucified.
And it is *fellowship* with Him
  That keeps me near His side.

My heart is fixed, O God, my strength!
  My heart is strong to bear;
I will be joyful in Thy love,
  And peaceful in Thy care.
Deal with me, for my Saviour's sake,
  According to His prayer.

No suffering, while it lasts, is joy,
  How blest soe'er it be,

Digitized by Google

Yet may the chastened child be glad
His Father's face to see;
And oh, it is not hard to bear
What must be borne in Thee.

It is not hard to bear by faith,
In Thine own bosom laid,
The trial of a soul redeemed,
For Thy rejoicing made.
Well may the heart in patience rest,
That none can make afraid.

Safe in Thy sanctifying grace,
Almighty to restore—
Borne onward—sin and death behind,
And love and life before.
Oh, let my soul abound in hope,
And praise Thee more and more!

Deep unto deep may call, but I
With peaceful heart will say:
Thy loving-kindness hath a charge
No waves can take away;
And let the storm that speeds me home,
Deal with me as it may.

XII.

A RESURRECTION HYMN.

"The Lord is risen."

Dear Saviour of a dying world,
Where grief and change must be,
In the new grave where Thou wast laid,
My heart lies down with Thee:
Oh, not in cold despair of joy,
Or weariness of pain,
But from a hope that shall not die,
To rise and live again.

I would arise in all Thy strength
My place on earth to fill—
To work out all my time of war
With love's unflinching will.
Firm against every doubt of Thee
For all my future way—
To walk in Heaven's eternal light
Throughout the changing day.

Ah, such a day as Thou shalt own
When suns have ceased to shine—
A day of burdens borne by Thee,
And work that all was Thine.
Speed Thy bright rising in my heart—
Thy righteous kingdom speed—
Till my whole life in concord say,
"The Lord is risen indeed."

Oh, for an impulse from Thy love
With every coming breath,
To sing that sweet undying song
Amid the wrecks of death!
A "hail!" to every mortal pang
That bids me take my right
To glory in the blessed life
Which Thou hast brought to light.

I long to see the hallowed earth
In new creation rise—
To find the germs of Eden hid
Where its fallen beauty lies—
To feel the spring-tide of a soul
By one deep love set free,
Made meet to lay aside her dust,
And be at home with Thee.

And then—there shall be yet an end—
An end now full to bless!
How dear to those who watch for Thee
With human tenderness!
Then shall the saying come to pass
That makes our hope complete,
And, rising from the conquered grave,
Thy parted ones shall meet.

Yes, they shall meet, and face to face
By heart to heart be known,
Clothed with Thy likeness, Lord of Life,
And perfect in their own.
For this corruptible must rise
From its corruption free,
And this frail mortal must put on
Thine immortality.

Shine then, Thou Resurrection Light—
Upon our sorrows shine!
The fulness of Thy joy be ours,
As all our griefs were Thine.
Now in this changing, dying life,
Our faded hopes restore,
Till, in Thy triumph perfected,
We taste of death no more.

XIII.

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth: for the Lord hath comforted His people."—Isaiah xlix. 13.

A living, loving, lasting word,
My listening ear believing heard,
While bending down in prayer;
Like a sweet breeze that none can stay,
It passed my soul upon its way,
And left a blessing there.

Then joyful thoughts that come and go,
By paths the holy angels know,
Encamped around my soul;
As in a dream of blest repose,
'Mid withered reeds a river rose,
And through the desert stole.

I lifted up my eyes to see—
The wilderness was glad for me,
Its thorns were bright with bloom;
And onward travellers still in sight
Marked out a path of shining light,
And shade unmixed with gloom.

Oh, sweet the strains of those before:
"The weary knees are weak no more,
The faithful heart is strong;"
But sweeter, nearer, from above,
That word of everlasting love,
The promise and the song.

Digitized by Google

DORA GREENWELL.

Dora Greenwell was born in England about 1830. Her first publication was "Christina, and other Poems," 1848. Her subsequent poetical publications are, "Stories that Might be True," 1851; a collected edition of her poems, 1867; and "Carmina Crucis," 1869. In prose she has published "The Power of Faith Exemplified in Life," 1849; "Two Friends," 1862; "The Patience of Hope," 1863; "A Present Heaven," 1863; and "Essays," 1866. Most of her works have been republished in the United States, "The Patience of Hope" with an introduction by John G. Whittier, who first called attention to the beauty of some of her sonnets.

REPENTANCE.

If the Lord were to send down blessings from heaven as thick and fast as the fall
Of the drops of rain or the flakes of snow, I 'd love Him and thank Him for all;
But the gift that I 'd crave and the gift that I 'd keep, if I 'd only one to choose,
Is the gift of a broken and contrite heart—and that He will not refuse.

For what is my wish and what is my hope, when I 've toiled and prayed and striven,
All the days that I live upon earth? It is this —to be forgiven.
And what is my wish and what is my hope, but to end where I begin,
With an eye that looks to my Saviour and a heart that mourns for its sin!

Well, perhaps you think I 'm going to say I 'm the chief of sinners; and then
You 'll tell me, as far as you can see, I 'm no worse than other men.
I 've little to do with better or worse—I have n't to judge the rest;
If other men are no better than I, they are bad enough at the best.

I 've nothing to do with other folks; it is n't for me to say
What sort of men the Scribes might be, or the Pharisees in their day;
But we know that it was n't for such as they that the kingdom of heaven was meant;
And we 're told we shall likewise perish, unless we do repent.

And what have I done, perhaps you 'll say, that I should fret and grieve?
I did n't wrangle, nor curse, nor swear; I did n't lie nor thieve;
I 'm clear of cheating and drinking and debt. —Well, perhaps, but I cannot say;
For some of these I had n't a mind, and some did n't come in my way.

For there 's many a thing I could wish undone, though the law might not be broken;
And there 's many a word, now I come to think, that I could wish unspoken.
I did what I thought to be the best, and I said just what came to my mind;
I was n't so honest that I could boast, and I 'm sure that I was n't kind.

We 'll come to the things that I might have done, and then there 'll be more to say:
We 'll ask for the broken hearts I healed, and the tears that I wiped away.
I thought for myself and I wrought for myself—for myself, and none beside:
Just as if Jesus had never lived, as it He had never died.

But since my Lord has looked on me, and since He has bid me look
Once on my heart and once on my life and once on His blessed Book,
And once on the cross where He died for me, He has taught me that I must mend,
If I 'd have Him to be my Saviour and keep Him to be my Friend.

Since He 's taken this long account of mine and has crossed it through and through,
Though He 's left me nothing at all to pay, He has given me enough to do;
He has taught me things that I never knew, with all my worry and care—
Things that have brought me down to my knees, and things that will keep me there.

He has shown me the law that works in Him and the law that works in me—
Life unto life and death unto death—and has asked how these agree;
He has made me weary of self and of pelf; yes, my Saviour has bid me grieve
For the days and years when I did n't pray, when I did n't love nor believe.

Since He 's taken this cold, dark heart of mine, and has pierced it through and through,
He has made me mourn both for things I did, and for things that I did n't do:
And what is my wish and what is my thought, but to end where I begin,
With an eye that looks to my Saviour, and a heart that mourns for its sin!

Digitized by Google

WHEN THE NIGHT AND MORNING MEET.

In the dark and narrow street,
  Into a world of woe,
Where the tread of many feet
  Went trampling to and fro,
  A child was born—speak low!—
When the night and morning meet.

Full seventy summers back
  Was this; so long ago,
The feet that wore the track
  Are lying straight and low;
Yet hath there been no lack
  Of passers to and fro.

Within the narrow street
  This childhood ever played;
Beyond the narrow street
  This manhood never strayed;
  This age sat still and prayed
Anear the trampling feet.

The tread of ceaseless feet
  Flowed through his life, unstirred
By waters' fall, or fleet
  Wind music, or the bird
Of morn; these sounds are sweet,
  But they were still unheard.

Within the narrow street
  I stood beside a bed,
  I held a dying head,
When the night and morning meet;
And every word was sweet,
  Though few the words we said.

And as we talked, dawn drew
  To-day; the world was fair
In fields afar, I knew;
  Yet spoke not to him there
Of how the grasses grew,
  Besprent with dewdrops rare.

We spoke not of the sun,
  Nor of this green earth fair;
This soul, whose day was done,
  Had never claimed its share
  In these, and yet its rare
Rich heritage had won.

From the dark and narrow street,
  Into a world of love
A child was born—speak low!—
Speak reverent, for we know
  Not how they speak above,
When the night and morning meet.

THE SOUL'S PARTING.

She sat within Life's Banquet Hall at noon,
When word was brought unto her secretly,
"The Master cometh onward quickly; soon
Across the threshold He will call for thee."
Then she rose up to meet Him at the door,
But turning, courteous, made a farewell brief
To those that sat around. From Care and Grief
She parted first: "Companions sworn and true
Have ye been ever to me, but for friends
I knew ye not till later, and did miss
Much solace through that error; let this kiss,
Late known and prized, be taken for amends:
Thou, too, kind, constant Patience, with thy slow,
Sweet counsels aiding me. I did not know
That ye were angels, until ye displayed
Your wings for flight. Now bless me!" But they said,
"We blest thee long ago."

Then turning unto twain
That stood together, tenderly and oft
She kissed them on their foreheads, whispering soft,
"Now must we part, yet leave me not before
Ye see me enter safe within the door;
Kind bosom-comforters, that by my side
The darkest hour found ever closest bide,
A dark hour waits me, ere for evermore
Night with its heaviness be overpast:
Stay with me till I cross the threshold o'er."
So Faith and Hope stayed by her till the last.

But giving both her hands
To one that stood the nearest—"Thou and I
May pass together; for the holy bands
God knits on earth are never loosed on high.
Long have I walked with thee; thy name arose
E'en in my sleep, and sweeter than the close
Of music was thy voice; for thou wert sent
To lead me homeward from my banishment
By devious ways, and never hath my heart
Swerved from thee, though our hands were wrung apart
By spirits sworn to sever us; above
Soon shall I look upon thee as thou art."
So she crossed o'er with Love.

SONNETS.

They who from mountain-peaks have gazed upon
  The wide, illimitable heavens, have said,
  That, still receding as they climbed, outspread,
The blue vault deepens over them, and one
By one drawn farther back, each starry sun
  Shoots down a feebler splendor overhead.
  So, Saviour, as our mounting spirits, led
Along Faith's living way to Thee, have won
A nearer access, up the difficult track
  Still pressing, on that rarer atmosphere,
When low beneath us flits the cloudy rack,
  We see Thee drawn within a widening sphere
Of glory, from us farther, farther back—
  Yet it is then because we are more *near*.

Too long have I, methought, with tearful eye
  Pored o'er this tangled work of mine, and mused
  Above each stitch awry and thread confused;
Now will I think on what in years gone by
I heard of them that weave rare tapestry
At royal looms, and how they constant use
To work on the rough side, and still peruse
The pictured pattern set above them high:
So will I set my copy high above,
  And gaze and gaze till on my spirit grows,
Its gracious impress—till some line of love,
  Transferred upon my canvas, faintly glows;
Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
He whom I work for sees their fairer side!

Digitized by Google

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

CHRISTINA GABRIELLA ROSSETTI was born in London in December, 1830. She is a daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, the Italian poet and exile, and sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the painter and poet. She has published "Goblin Market, and other Poems," 1862; "The Prince's Progress, and other Poems," 1866; "Commonplace, and other Short Stories in Prose," 1870; "Sing-Song, a Nursery Rhyme Book," 1872; and "Speaking Likenesses" and "Annus Domini," 1874. Her poems were illustrated with designs by her brother. They have been republished in Boston, and have met with wide appreciation on both sides of the Atlantic.

DREAM-LAND.

WHERE sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far,
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water-springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
  The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake,
Night that no morn shall break,
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

AT HOME.

WHEN I was dead, my spirit turned
  To seek the much-frequented house;
I passed the door, and saw my friends
  Feasting beneath green orange-boughs;
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
  They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
  For each was loved of each.

I listened to their honest chat:
  Said one, "To-morrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands,
  And coasting miles and miles of sea."
Said one, "Before the turn of tide,
  We will achieve the eyrie-seat."
Said one, "To-morrow shall be like
  To-day, but much more sweet."

"To-morrow," said they, strong with hope,
  And dwelt upon the pleasant way;
"To-morrow," cried they, one and all,
  While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
  I, only I, had passed away:
"To-morrow and to-day," they cried;
  I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
  No chill across the table-cloth;
I, all forgotten, shivered, sad
  To stay, and yet to part how loath!
I passed from the familiar room,
  I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest
  That tarrieth but a day.

A TRIAD.

THREE sang of love together: one with lips
  Crimson, with cheeks and bosom in a glow,
Flushed to the yellow hair and finger-tips;
  And one there sang who, soft and smooth as snow,
  Bloomed like a tinted hyacinth at a show;
And one was blue with famine after love,
  Who, like a harp-string snapped, rang harsh and low
The burden of what those were singing of.

One shamed herself in love; one temperately
  Grew gross in soulless love, a sluggish wife;
One famished, died for love. Thus two of three
  Took death for love and won him after strife;
One droned in sweetness like a fattened bee:
  All on the threshold, yet all short of life.

Digitized by Google

COUSIN KATE.

I was a cottage maiden,
  Hardened by sun and air,
Contented with my cottage mates,
  Not mindful I was fair.
Why did a great lord find me out,
  And praise my flaxen hair?
Why did a great lord find me out,
  To fill my heart with care?

He lured me to his palace home—
  Woe 's me for joy thereof!—
To lead a shameless, shameful life,
  His plaything and his love.
He wore me like a silken knot,
  He changed me like a glove;
So now I moan, an unclean thing,
  Who might have been a dove.

O Lady Kate, my Cousin Kate,
  You grew more fair than I:
He saw you at your father's gate,
  Chose you, and cast me by.
He watched your steps along the lane,
  Your work among the rye;
He lifted you from mean estate,
  To sit with him on high.

Because you were so good and pure,
  He bound you with his ring:
The neighbors call you good and pure,
  Call me an outcast thing.
Even so I sit and howl in dust,
  You sit in gold and sing:
Now, which of us has tenderer heart?—
  You had the stronger wing.

O Cousin Kate, my love was true;
  Your love was writ in sand:
If he had fooled not me, but you—
  If you stood where I stand—
He 'd not have won me with his love,
  Nor bought me with his land;
I would have spit into his face,
  And not have taken his hand.

Yet I 've a gift you have not got,
  And seem not like to get:
For all your clothes and wedding-ring,
  I 've little doubt you fret.
My fair-haired son, my shame, my pride,
  Cling closer, closer yet;
Your father would give lands for one
  To wear his coronet.

NOBLE SISTERS.

"Now, did you mark a falcon,
  Sister dear, sister dear,
Flying toward my window,
  In the morning cool and clear,
With jingling bells about her neck,
  But what beneath her wing?
It may have been a ribbon,
  Or it may have been a ring."—

"I marked a falcon swooping
  At the break of day:
And for your love, my sister dove,
  I 'frayed the thief away."

"Or did you spy a ruddy hound,
  Sister fair and tall,
Went snuffing round my garden bound,
  Or crouched by my bower-wall,
With a silken leash about his neck,
  But in his mouth, may be,
A chain of gold and silver links,
  Or a letter writ to me?"—
"I heard a hound, high-born sister,
  Stood baying at the moon:
I rose and drove him from your wall,
  Lest you should wake too soon."

"Or did you meet a pretty page
  Sat swinging on the gate—
Sat whistling, whistling like a bird,
  Or may be slept too late,
With eaglets broidered on his cap,
  And eaglets on his glove?
If you had turned his pockets out,
  You had found some pledge of love."—
"I met him at this daybreak,
  Scarce the east was red:
Lest the creaking gate should anger you,
  I packed him home to bed."

"Oh, patience, sister. Did you see
  A young-man tall and strong,
Swift-footed to uphold the right
  And to uproot the wrong,
Come home across the desolate sea
  To woo me for his wife?
And in his heart my heart is locked,
  And in his life my life."—
"I met a nameless man, sister,
  Hard by your chamber-door:
I said, 'Her husband loves her much,
  And yet she loves him more.'"

"Fie, sister, fie! a wicked lie—
  A lie, a wicked lie!
I have none other love but him,
  Nor will have till I die.
And you have turned him from our door,
  And stabbed him with a lie.
I will go seek him through the world
  In sorrow till I die."—
"Go seek in sorrow, sister,
  And find in sorrow, too:
If thus you shame our father's name,
  My curse go forth with you!"

A BIRTHDAY.

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Digitized by Google

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lis;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come—my love is come to me.

REMEMBER.

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then, or pray.
Yet, if you should forget me for a while
And afterward remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile,
Than that you should remember and be sad.

AN APPLE-GATHERING.

I plucked pink blossoms from mine apple-tree,
And wore them all that evening in my hair;
Then in due season, when I went to see,
I found no apples there.

With dangling basket all along the grass,
As I had come, I went the selfsame track;
My neighbors mocked me while they saw me pass
So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lilias smiled in trudging by;
Their heaped-up basket teased me like a jeer:
Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky,
Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full;
A stronger hand than hers helped it along:
A voice talked with her through the shadows cool,
More sweet to me than song.

Ah, Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
I counted rosiest apples on the earth
Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk,
Laughing and listening in this very lane:
To think that by this way we used to walk,
We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbors pass me, ones and twos
And groups; the latest said the night grew chill,
And hastened, but I loitered: while the dews
Fell fast, I loitered still.

THREE SEASONS.

"A cup for hope!" she said,
In springtime ere the bloom was old:
The crimson wine was poor and cold
By her mouth's richer red.

"A cup for love!" how low,
How soft the words! and all the while
Her blush was rippling with a smile
Like summer after snow.

"A cup for memory!"
Cold cup that one must drain alone:
While autumn winds are up, and moan
Across the barren sea.

Hope, memory, love:
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening gray,
And solitary dove.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE."

I bore with thee long weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
For three-and-thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above;
I not My flesh, I not My spirit spared:
Give thou Me love for love.

For thee I thirsted in the daily drouth,
For thee I trembled in the nightly frost:
Much sweeter thou than honey to My mouth:
Why wilt thou still be lost?

I bore thee on My shoulders and rejoiced:
Men only marked upon My shoulders borne
The branding cross, and shouted hungry-voiced,
Or wagged their heads in scorn.

Thee did nails grave upon My hands; thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between mine eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame—
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon My right hand and My left;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery;
At length in death one smote My heart, and cleft
A hiding-place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and sleep:
So did I win a kingdom—share My crown;
A harvest—come and reap.

Digitized by Google

ADVENT.

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
  These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year,
  And still their flame is strong.
"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,
  Heart-sick with hope deferred.
"No speaking signs are in the sky,"
  Is still the watchman's word.

The porter watches at the gate,
  The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes, and late;
  The prize is slow to win.
"Watchman, what of the night?" but still
  His answer sounds the same:
"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
  Nor pale our lamps of flame."

One to another hear them speak,
  The patient virgins wise:
"Surely He is not far to seek."—
  "All night we watch and rise."—
"The days are evil looking back,
  The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
  But watch and wait for Him."

One with another, soul with soul,
  They kindle fire from fire:
"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."—
  "They urge us come up higher."—
"With them shall rest our waysore feet;
  With them is built our home—
With Christ."—"They sweet, but He most sweet,
  Sweeter than honeycomb."

There no more parting, no more pain,
  The distant ones brought near;
The lost so long are found again,
  Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
  Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
  With Jesus Christ, our Best.

We weep because the night is long;
  We laugh, for day shall rise;
We sing a slow contented song,
  And knock at Paradise.
Weeping, we hold Him fast who wept
  For us—we hold Him fast,
And will not let Him go except
  He bless us first or last.

Weeping, we hold Him fast to-night;
  We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,
  And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
  Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, "Arise, my love,
  My fair one, come away."

THE THREE ENEMIES.

THE FLESH.

"Sweet, thou art pale."
"More pale to see,
Christ hung upon the cruel tree,
And bore His Father's wrath for me."

"Sweet, thou art sad."
"Beneath a rod
More heavy, Christ for my sake trod
The winepress of the wrath of God."

"Sweet, thou art weary."
"Not so Christ,
Whose mighty love of me sufficed
For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist."

"Sweet, thou art footsore."
"If I bleed,
His feet have bled: yea, in my need
His heart once bled for mine indeed."

THE WORLD.

"Sweet, thou art young."
"So He was young,
Who for my sake in silence hung
Upon the Cross, with Passion wrung."

"Look—thou art fair!"
"He was more fair
Than men, who deigned for me to wear
A visage marred beyond compare."

"And thou hast riches."
"Daily bread!
All else is His, who living, dead,
For me lacked where to lay His head."

"And life is sweet."
"It was not so
To Him, whose cup did overflow
With mine unutterable woe."

THE DEVIL.

"Thou drinkest deep."
"When Christ would sup,
He drained the dregs from out my cup:
So how should I be lifted up?"

"Thou shalt win glory."
"In the skies.—
Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes,
Lest they should look on vanities."

"Thou shalt have knowledge."
"Helpless dust,
In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:
Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just."

"And might."
"Get thee behind me!—Lord,
Who hast redeemed and not abhorred
My soul, O keep it by Thy word."

Digitized by Google

ALEXANDER SMITH.

ALEXANDER SMITH was born, December 31, 1830, in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland. He received a common-school education, and entered a lace-factory in Glasgow as a pattern-designer, his father's trade. His leisure time was given to poetry, and in 1853 he published "A Life Drama," in blank verse, together with a few short poems. The volume was at once successful, and the critics predicted a great future for the young poet. The next year he was appointed Secretary to the University of Edinburgh, and delivered a course of lectures. In 1855 he published, with Sydney Dobell, "Sonnets on the War;" in 1857 "City Poems;" and in 1861 "Edwin of Deira," a long narrative poem in blank verse. His prose publications were "Dreamthorp," a volume of delicious essays, 1863; "A Summer in Skye," 1865; "Alfred Hagart's Household," a novel, 1865, and a sequel to it, "Miss Oona McQuarrie," 1866. He died at Wardie, near Edinburgh, January 5, 1867, at the age which seems singularly fatal to poets, thirty-six. A posthumous volume, edited with a memoir by P. P. Alexander, was published under the title of "Last Leaves" in 1868.

Smith was overrated on his first appearance, and, as generally happens, was afterward quite as much underrated. The rattling poem "Balaklava," which is attributed to him in Bryant's "Library of Poetry and Song" and elsewhere, was written by an American poet, Alexander B. Meek, and is included in his "Songs and Poems of the South" (Mobile, 1857).

SQUIRE MAURICE.

I THREW from off me yesterday
The dull life I am doomed to wear—
A worn-out garment dim and bare—
And left it in my chambers gray:
The salt breeze wanders in my hair
Beside the splendor of the main:
Ere on the deep three sunsets burn,
To the old chambers I return,
And put it on again.
An old coat, worn for many a year,
No wonder it is something dear!

Ah, year by year life's fire burns out,
And year by year life's stream runs dry:
The wild-deer dies within the blood,
The falcon in the eye.
And Hope, who sang miraculous songs
Of what should be, like one inspired,
How she should right the ancient wrongs,
(The generous fool!) grows hoarse and tired;
And turns from visions of a world renewed,
To dream of tripled rents, fair miles of stream
and wood.
The savage horse, that leads
His tameless herd across the endless plain,
Is taught at last, with sullen heart, to strain
Beneath his load, nor quiver when he bleeds.
We cheat ourselves with our own lying eyes,
We chase a fleeting mirage o'er the sand,
Across a grave the smiling phantom flies,
O'er which we fall with a vain-clutching hand.
What matter—if we heave laborious breath,
And crack our hearts and sinews, groan and
weep,
The pain of life but sweetens death,
The hardest labor brings the soundest sleep

On bank and brae how thick they grow,
The self-same clumps, the self-same dyes,
The primroses of long ago—
But ah! the altered eyes!
I dream they are the very flowers,
Warm with the sun, wet with the showers,
Which, years ago, I used to pull
Returning from the murmuring school.
Sweet Nature is a mother evermore;
A thousand tribes are breathing on the shore;
The pansy blows beside the rock,
The globe-flower where the eddy swirls;
And on this withered human stock
Burst rosy boys and girls.
Sets Nature little store
On that which once she bore?
Does she forget the old, in rapture bear the
new?
Are ye the flowers that grew
In other seasons? Do they e'er return,
The men who build the cities on the plain?
Or must my tearless eyeballs burn
Forever o'er that early urn,
Ne'er to be cooled by a delicious dew?
Let me take back my pain
Unto my heart again;
Before I can recover that I lack
The world must be rolled back.

Digitized by Google

Inland I wander slow,
Mute with the power the earth and heaven wield:
A black spot sails across the golden field,
And through the air a crow.
Before me wavers spring's first butterfly;
From out the sunny noon there starts the cuckoo's cry;
The daisied meads are musical with lambs;
Some play, some feed, some, white as snowflakes, lie
In the deep sunshine, by their silent dams.
The road grows wide and level to the feet;
The wandering woodbine through the hedge is drawn,
Unblown its streaky bugles dim and sweet;
Knee-deep in fern stand startled doe and fawn,
And lo! there gleams upon a spacious lawn
An earl's marine retreat.
A little foot-path quivers up the height,
And what a vision for a townsman's sight!
A village, peeping from its orchard bloom,
With lowly roofs of thatch, blue threads of smoke,
O'erlooking all, a parsonage of white.
I hear the smithy's hammer, stroke on stroke;
A steed is at the door; the rustics talk,
Proud of the notice of the gaitered groom;
A shallow river breaks o'er shallow falls.
Beside the ancient sluice that turns the mill
The lusty miller bawls;
The parson listens in his garden-walk,
The red-cloaked woman pauses on the hill.
This is a place, you say, exempt from ill,
A paradise, where, all the loitering day,
Enamored pigeons coo upon the roof,
Where children ever play.—
Alas! Time's webs are rotten, warp and woof;
Rotten his cloth of gold, his coarsest wear.
Here, black-eyed Richard ruins red-cheeked Moll,
Indifferent as a lord to her despair.
The broken barrow hates the prosperous dray;
And, for a padded pew in which to pray,
The grocer sells his soul.

This cosey hostelry a visit craves;
Here will I sit awhile,
And watch the heavenly sunshine smile
Upon the village graves.
Strange is this little room in which I wait,
With its old table, rough with rustic names.
'T is summer now; instead of blinking flames,
Sweet-smelling ferns are hanging o'er the grate.
With curious eyes I pore
Upon the mantel-piece, its precious wares,
Glazed Scripture prints in black lugubrious frames,
Filled with old Bible lore:
The whale is casting Jonah on the shore;
Pharaoh is drowning in the curly wave;
And to Elijah sitting at his cave
The hospitable ravens fly in pairs,
Celestial food within their horny beaks;
On a slim David, with great pinky cheeks,
A towered Goliath stares.
Here will I sit at peace:
While, piercing through the window's ivy-veil,
A slip of sunshine smites the amber ale;
And, as the wreaths of fragrant smoke increase,
I 'll read the letter which came down to-day.
Ah, happy Maurice! while in chambers dun
I pore o'er deeds and parchments growing gray,
Each glowing realm that spreads beneath the sun
Is but a paradise where you may play.
I am a bonded workman, you are free;
In your blood's hey-day—mine is early cold.
Life is rude furze at best; the sea-breeze wrings
And eats my branches on the bitter lea;
But you have root in dingle fat and old,
Fat with decayings of a hundred springs,
And blaze all splendid in your points of gold,
And in your heart a linnet sits and sings.

"Unstable as the wind, infirm as foam,
I envy, Charles, your calmness and your peace;
The eye that marks its quarry from afar,
The heart that stoops on it and smites it down.
I, struggling in a dim and obscure net,
Am but enmeshed the more. When you were here
My spirit often burned to tell you all;
I urged the horse up to the leap, it shied
At something in the hedge. This must not last;
In shame and sorrow, ere I sleep to-night,
I 'll shrive my inmost soul.
I have knelt, and sworn
By the sweet heavens—I have madly prayed
To be by them forsaken, when I forsake
A girl whose lot should be to sleep content
Upon a peasant's breast, and toil all day
'Mong flaxen-headed children. She sits to-night,
When all the little town is lost in dream,
Her lax hands sunk in her neglected work,
Thinking of me. Smile not, my man of law,
Who, with a peering candle, walkest through
Black places in men's hearts, which only hear
The foot of conscience at the dead of night!
Her name might slip into my holiest prayer;
Her breath has come and gone upon my cheek,
Yet I dare stand before my mother's face,
Dare look into the heavenly eyes that yearn
Forever through a mist of golden hair,
With no shame on my brow. 'T is not that way
My trouble looks. Yet, friend, in simple truth,
Could this thing be obliterated quite,
Expunged forever, like a useless cloak
I 'd fling off my possessions, and go forth,
My roof the weeping heaven.
Though I would die
Rather than give her pain, I grimly smile
To think, were I assured this horrid dream,
Which poisons day to me, would only prove
A breath upon the mirror of her mind—
A moment dim, then gone (an issue which
Could *I* have blotted out all memory,
Would let me freely breathe)—this love would turn
To bitterest gall of hate. O Vanity,
Thou god, who on the altar thou hast built
Pilest myrrh and frankincense, appliest the flame,
Then snuff'st the smoky incense, high and calm!
Thou nimble Proteus of all human shapes!

Digitized by Google

Malvolio, cross-gartered in the sun,
The dying martyr, gazing from his fire
Upon the opened heavens, filled with crowds
Of glorious angel-faces:—thou art all
We smile at, all we hymn! For thee we blush,
For thee shed noble tears! The glowing coal,
O'er which the frozen beggar spreads his hands,
Is of one essence with the diamond
That on the haughty forehead of a queen
Trembles with dewy light. Could *I*, through pain,
Give back the peace I stole, my heart would leap;
Could *she* forget me and regain content—
How deeply I am wronged!

"Is it the ancient trouble of my house
That makes the hours so terrible? Other men
Live to more purpose than those monstrous weeds
That drink a breadth of sunshine, and give back
Nor hue nor fragrance; but my spirit droops,
A dead and idle banner from its staff,
Unstirred by any wind. Within a cell,
Without a straw to play with, or a nail
To carve my sorrow on the gloomy stone,
I sit and watch, from stagnant day to day,
The bloated spider hanging on its thread,
The dull fly on the wall. The blessed sleep
For which none are too poor—the sleep that comes
So sweetly to the weary laboring-man,
The march-worn soldier on the naked ground,
The martyr in the pauses of the rack,
Drives me through forests full of dreadful eyes,
Flings me o'er precipices—makes me kneel,
A sentenced man, before the dark platoon,
Or lays me helpless in the dim embrace
Of formless horror. Long ago, two foes
Lay in the yellow evening in their gore:
Like a malignant fury, that wild hour
Threw madness in the river of our blood:
Though it has run for thrice a century,
Been sweetened all the way by mothers' tears,
'T is poisoned until now.
See how I stand
Delaying on the brink, like one who fears
And yet would meet the chill! When you were here
You saw a smoking-cap among my books;
A fond and fluttering letter badly spelt,
Each sentence headed with a little *i*,
Came with it, read with a blush, tossed in the fire,
Nor answered yet. Can you not now detect
The snail's slime on the rose?
This miserable thing
Grew round me like the ivy round the oak;
Sweet were its early creeping rings, though now
I choke, from knotted root to highest bough.
In those too happy days I could not name
This strange new thing which came upon my youth,
But yielded to its sweetness. Fling it off?
Trample it down? Bid me pluck out the eye
In which the sweet world dwells!—One night she wept;
It seemed so strange that *I* could make her weep;
Kisses may lie, but tears are surely true.
Then unbelief came back in solitude,
And Love grew cruel; and to be assured
Cried out for tears, and with a shaking hand
And a wild heart that could have almost burst
With utter tenderness, yet would not spare,
He clutched her heart, and at the starting tears
Grew soft with all remorse. For those mad hours
Remembrance frets my heart in solitude,
As the lone mouse when all the house is still
Gnaws at the wainscot.
'T is a haunting face,
Yet oftentimes I think I love her not;
Love's white hand flutters o'er my spirit's keys
Unkissed by grateful music. Oft I think
The Lady Florence at the county ball,
Quenching the beauties as the lightning dims
The candles in a room, scarce smiles so sweet.
The one oppresses like a crown of gold,
The other gladdens like a beam in spring,
Stealing across a dim field, making blithe
Its daisies one by one.—I deemed that I
Had broke my house of bondage, when one night
The memory of her face came back so sweet,
And stood between me and the printed page;
And phantoms of a thousand happy looks
Smiled from the dark. It was the old weak tale
Which time has told from Adam till this hour:
The slave comes back, takes up his broken chain.
I rode through storm toward the little town;
The minster, gleamed on by the flying moon,
Tolled midnight as I passed. I only sought
To see the line of light beneath her door,
The knowledge of her nearness was so sweet.
Hid in the darkness of the church, I watched
Her window like a shrine: a light came in,
And a soft shadow broke along the roof;
She raised the window and leaned forth awhile.
I could have fallen down and kissed her feet;
The poor dear heart, I knew it could not rest;
I stood between her and the light—my shade
Fell 'cross her silver sphere. The window closed.
When morn with cold bleak crimson laced the east,
Against a stream of raw and rainy wind
I rode back to the hall.
The play-book tells
How Fortune's slippery wheel in Syracuse
Flung prosperous lordship to the chilly shades,
Heaved serfdom to the sun: in precious silks
Charwomen flounced, and scullions sat and laughed
In golden chairs, to see their fellows play
At football with a crown. Within my heart
In this old house, when all the fiends are here,
The story is renewed. Peace only comes
With a wild ride across the barren downs,
One look upon her face. She ne'er complains
Of my long absences, my hasty speech—
'Crumbs from thy table are enough for me.'
She only asks to be allowed to lean
Her head against my breast a little while,
And she is paid for all. I choke with tears,
And think myself a devil from the pit
Loved by an angel. Oh, that she would change

Digitized by Google

This tenderness and drooping-lily look,
The flutter when I come, the unblaming voice,
Wet eyes held up to kiss! One flash of fire,
A moment's start of keen and crimson scorn,
Would make me hers forever!
I draw my birth
From a long line of gallant gentleman,
Who only feared a lie—but what is this?
I dare not slight the daughter of a peer;
Her kindred could avenge. Yet I dare play
And palter with the pure soul of a girl
Without a friend, who, smitten, speaks no word,
But with a helpless face sinks in the grave,
And takes her wrongs to God. Thou dark Sir Ralph,
Who lay with broken brand on Marston Moor,
What think you of this son?

"This prison that I dwell in hath two doors,
Desertion, marriage; both are shut by shame,
And barred by cowardice. A stronger man
Would screw his heart up to the bitter wrench,
And break through either and regain the air.
I cannot give myself or others pain.
I wear a conscience nice and scrupulous,
Which, while it hesitates to draw a tear,
Lets a heart break. Conscience should be clear-eyed,
And look through years: conscience is tenderest oft
When clad in sternness, when it smites to-day,
To stay the ruin which it hears afar
Upon the wind. Pure womanhood is meek—
But which is nobler, the hysterical girl
Weeping o'er flies huddling in slips of sun
On autumn sills, who has not heart enough
To crush a wounded grasshopper and end
Torture at once; or she, with flashing eyes,
Among the cannon, an heroic foot
Upon a fallen breast? My nerveless will
Is like a traitorous second, and deserts
My purpose in the very gap of need.
I groan beneath this cowardice of heart,
Which rolls the evil to be borne to-day
Upon to-morrow, loading it with gloom.
The man who clothes the stony moor with green,
In virtue of the beauty he creates,
Has there a right to dwell. And he who stands
Firm in this shifting sand and drift of things,
And rears from out the wasteful elements
An ordered home, in which the awful Gods,
The lighter Graces, serene Muses, dwell,
Holds in that masterdom the chartered right
To his demesne of Time. But I hold none;
I live by sufferance, am weak and vain
As a shed leaf upon a turbid stream,
Or an abandoned boat which can but drift
Whither the currents draw—to maelstrom, or
To green, delicious shores. I should have had
My pendent cradle rocked by laughing winds
Within some innocent and idle isle
Where the sweet bread-fruit ripens and falls down,
Where the swollen pumpkin lolls upon the ground,
The lithe and slippery savage, drenched with oil,
Sleeps in the sun, and life is lazy ease.
But lamentation and complaint are vain:
The skies are stern and serious as doom;
The avalanche is loosened by a laugh;
And he who throws the dice of destiny,
Though with a sportive and unthinking hand,
Must bide the issue, be it life or death.
One path is clear before me. It may lead
O'er perilous rock, 'cross sands without a well,
Through deep and difficult chasms; but therein
The whiteness of the soul is kept, and that,
Not joy nor happiness, is victory.

"Ah, she is not the creature who I dreamed
Should one day walk beside me dearly loved:
No fair majestic woman, void of fear,
And unabashed from purity of heart;
No girl with liquid eyes and shadowy hair,
To sing at twilight like a nightingale,
Or fill the silence with her glimmering smiles,
Deeper than speech or song. She has no birth,
No dowry, graces; no accomplishments,
Save a pure cheek, a fearless, innocent brow,
And a true-beating heart. She is no bank
Of rare exotics which o'ercome the sense
With perfumes—only fresh uncultured soil
With a wild-violet grace and sweetness born
Of Nature's teeming foison. Is this not
Enough to sweeten life? Could one not live
On brown bread, clearest water? Is this love
(What idle poets feign in fabling songs)
An unseen god, whose voice is heard but once
In youth's green valleys, ever dead and mute
'Mong manhood's iron hills? A power that comes
On the instant, whelming, like the light that smote
Saul from his horse; never a thing that draws
Its exquisite being from the light of smiles
And low sweet tones and fond companionship?
Brothers and sisters grow up by our sides,
Unfelt and silently are knit to us,
And one flesh with our hearts; would love not grow
In the communion of long-wedded years,
Sweet as the dawning light, the greening spring?
Would not an infant be the marriage priest,
To stand between us and unite our hands,
And bid us love and be obeyed?—its life,
A fountain, with a cooling fringe of green
Amid the arid sands, by which we twain
Could dwell in deep content? My sunshine drew
This odorous blossom from the bough; why then
With frosty fingers wither it, and seal up
Sun-ripened fruit within its barren rind,
Killing all sweet delights? I drew it forth:
If there is suffering, let me bear it all.

"A very little goodness goes for much.
Walk 'mong my peasants—every urchin's face
Lights at my coming; girls at cottage-doors
Rise from their work and curtsey as I pass,
And old men bless me with their silent tears!
What have I done for this? I'm kind, they say,
Give coals in winter, cordials for the sick,
And once a fortnight stroke a curly head
Which hides half-frightened in a russet gown.

Digitized by Google

'T is easy for the sun to shine. My alms
Are to my riches like a beam to him.
They love me, these poor hinds, though I have ne'er
Resigned a pleasure, let a whim be crossed,
Pinched for an hour the stomach of desire
For one of them. Good Heaven! what am I
To be thus servitored? Am I to range
Like the discourseless creatures of the wood,
Without the common dignity of pain,
Without a pale or limit? To take up love
For its strange sweetness, and, whene'er it tires,
Fling it aside as careless as I brush
A gnat from off my arm, and go my way
Untwinged with keen remorse? All this must end.
Firm land at last begins to peer above
The ebbing waves of hesitance and doubt.
Throughout this deepening spring my purpose grows
To flee with her to those young morning lands—
Australia, where the earth is gold, or where
The prairies roll toward the setting sun.
Not Lady Florence with her coronet,
Flinging white arms around me, murmuring
'Husband' upon my breast—not even that
Could make me happy, if I left a grave
On which the shadow of the village spire
Should rest at ease. The pain, if pain there be,
I'll keep locked up within my secret heart,
And wear what joy I have upon my face;
And she shall live and laugh, and never know.

"Come, Brother, at your earliest, down to me.
To-morrow night I sleep at Ferny-Chase:
There, shadowed by the memory of the dead,
We'll talk of this. My thought, mayhap, will take
A different hue, seen in your purer light,
Free from all stain of passion. Ere you come,
Break that false mirror of your ridicule,
Looking in which, the holiest saint beholds
A grinning Jackanapes, and hates himself.
More men have Laughter driven from the right
Than Terror clad with fire. You have been young,
And know the mystery, that when we love,
We love the thing, not only for itself,
But somewhat also for the love we give.
Think of the genial season of your youth,
When you dwelt here, and come with serious heart."

So, in that bitter quarter sits the wind:
The village fool could tell, unless it shifts,
'T will bring the rain in fiercest flaws and drifts!
How wise we are, yet blind,
Judging the wood's grain from the outer rind!
Wrapped in the twilight of this prison dim,
He envies me, I envy him!

The stream of my existence boils and leaps
Through broken rainbows 'mong the purple fells,
And breaks its heart 'mid rocks, close-jammed, confined,
And plunges in a chasm black and blind,
To rage in hollow gulfs and iron hells,
And thence escaping, tamed and broken, creeps
Away in a wild sweat of beads and bells.
Though *his* slides lazy through the milky meads,
And once a week the sleepy slow-trailed barge
Rocks the broad water-lilies on its marge,
A dead face wavers from the oozy weeds.
It is but little matter where we dwell,
In Fortune's centre, on her utter verge;
Whether to death our weary steps we urge,
Or ride with ringing bridle, golden selle.
Life is one pattern wrought in different hues,
And there is naught to choose
Between its sad and gay—'t is but to groan
Upon a rainy common or a throne,
Bleed 'neath the purple or the peasants' serge.

At his call I will go,
Though it is very little love can do;
In spite of all affection tried and true,
Each man alone must struggle with his woe.
He pities her, for he has done her wrong,
And would repair the evil—noble deed,
To flash and tingle in a minstrel's song,
To move the laughter of our modern breed!
And yet the world is wise; each curve and round
Of custom's road is no result of chance;
It curves but to avoid some treacherous ground,
Some quagmire in the wilds of circumstance;
Nor safely left. The long-drawn caravan
Wavers through heat, then files o'er Mecca's stones;
Far in the blinding desert lie the bones
Of the proud-hearted solitary man.
He marries her, but ere the year has died—
'T is an old tale—they wander to the grave
With hot revolting hearts, yet lashed and tied
Like galley-slave to slave.
Love should not stoop to Love, like prince to lord:
While o'er their heads proud Cupid claps his wings,
Love should meet Love upon the marriage sward,
And kiss, like crownèd kings.
If both are hurt, then let them bear the pain
Upon their separate paths; 't will die at last:
The deed of one rash moment may remain
To darken all the future with the past.
And yet I cannot tell—the beam that kills
The gypsy's fire kindles the desert flower;
Where he plucks blessings I may gather ills,
And in his sweetest sweet find sourest sour.
If what of wisdom and experience
My years have brought be either guide or aid,
They shall be his, though to my mournful sense
The lights will steal away from wood and glade;
The garden will be sad with all its glows,
And I shall hear the glistening laurels talk
Of her, as I pass under in the walk,
And my light step will thrill each conscious rose.

The lark hangs high o'er Ferny-Chase
In slant of sun, in twinkle of rain;
Though loud and clear, the song I hear
Is half of joy, and half of pain.
I know by heart the dear old place,

Digitized by Google

The place where Spring and Summer meet—
By heart, like those old ballad rhymes,
O'er which I brood a million times,
And sink from sweet to deeper sweet.
I know the changes of the idle skies,
The idle shapes in which the clouds are blown;
The dear old place is now before my eyes,
Yea, to the daisy's shadow on the stone.
When through the golden furnace of the heat
The far-off landscape seems to shake and beat,
Within the lake I see old Hodge's cows
Stand in their shadows in a tranquil drowse,
While o'er them hangs a restless steam of flies.
I see the clustered chimneys of the hall
Stretch o'er the lawn toward the blazing lake;
And in the dewy even-fall
I hear the mellow thrushes call
From tree to tree, from brake to brake.
Ah! when I thither go
I know that my joy-emptied eyes shall see
A white Ghost wandering where the lilies blow,
A Sorrow sitting by the trysting-tree.
I kiss this soft curl of her living hair,
'T is full of light as when she did unbind
Her sudden ringlets, making bright the wind:
'T is here, but she is—where?
Why do I, like a child impatient, weep?
Delight dies like a wreath of frosted breath;
Though here I toil upon the barren deep,
I see the sunshine yonder lie asleep
Upon the calm and beauteous shores of Death.
Ah, Maurice, let thy human heart decide,
The first best pilot through distracting jars.
The lowliest roof of love at least will hide
The desolation of the lonely stars.
Stretched on the painful rack of forty years,
I 've learned at last the sad philosophy
Of the unhoping heart, unshrinking eye—
God knows; my icy wisdom and my sneers
Are frozen tears!

The day wears, and I go.
Farewell, Elijah! may you heartily dine!
I cannot, David, see your fingers twine
In the long hair of your foe.
Housewife, adieu, Heaven keep your ample form;
May custom never fail;
And may your heart, as sound as your own ale,
Be soured by never a storm!

Though I have travelled now for twice an hour,
I have not heard a bird or seen a flower.
This wild road has a little mountain-rill
To sing to it, ah! happier than I.
How desolate the region, and how still
The idle earth looks on the idle sky!
I trace the river by its wandering green;
The vale contracts to a steep pass of fear,
And through the midnight of the pines I hear
The torrent raging down the long ravine.
At last I 've reached the summit high and bare;
I fling myself on heather dry and brown:
As silent as a picture lies the town,
Its peaceful smokes are curling in the air;
The bay is one delicious sheet of rose,
And round the far point of the tinted cliffs
I see the long strings of the fishing-skiffs
Come home to roost like lines of evening crows.
I can be idle only one day more
As the nets drying on the sunny shore;
Thereafter, chambers, still 'mid thronged resorts,
Strewn books and littered parchments, naught to see,
Save a charwoman's face, a dingy tree,
A fountain plashing in the empty courts.

But let me hasten down this shepherd's track,
The night is at my back.

LADY BARBARA.

Earl Gawain wooed the Lady Barbara—
High-thoughted Barbara, so white and cold!
'Mong broad-branched beeches in the summer shaw,
In soft green light his passion he has told.
When rain-beat winds did shriek across the wold,
The earl to take her fair reluctant ear
Framed passion-trembled ditties manifold;
Silent she sat his amorous breath to hear,
With calm and steady eyes, her heart was otherwhere.

He sighed for her through all the summer weeks;
Sitting beneath a tree whose fruitful boughs
Bore glorious apples with smooth-shining cheeks,
Earl Gawain came and whispered, "Lady, rouse!
Thou art no vestal held in holy vows,
Out with our falcons to the pleasant heath."
Her father's blood leaped up unto her brows—
He who, exulting on the trumpet's breath,
Came charging like a star across the lists of death,

Trembled, and passed before her high rebuke;
And then she sat, her hands clasped round her knee;
Like one far-thoughted was the lady's look,
For in a morning cold as misery
She saw a lone ship sailing on the sea;
Before the north 't was driven like a cloud,
High on the poop a man sat mournfully:
The wind was whistling thorough mast and shroud,
And to the whistling wind thus did he sing aloud:

"Didst look last night upon my native vales,
Thou Sun, that from the drenching sea hast clomb?
Ye demon winds, that glut my gaping sails,
Upon the salt sea must I ever roam,
Wander forever on the barren foam?
Oh happy are ye, resting mariners;
O Death, that thou wouldst come and take me home!
A hand unseen this vessel onward steers,
And onward I must float through slow moon-measured years.

Digitized by Google

"Ye winds! when like a curse ye drove us on,
Frothing the waters, and along our way,
Nor cape, nor headland, through red mornings shone,
One wept aloud, one shuddered down to pray,
One howled, 'Upon the deep we are astray!'
On our wild hearts, his words fell like a blight;
In one short hour my hair was stricken gray,
For all the crew sank ghastly in my sight
As we went driving on through the cold, starry night.

"Madness fell on me in my loneliness,
The sea foamed curses, and the reeling sky
Became a dreadful face which did oppress
Me with the weight of its unwinking eye.
It fled, when I burst forth into a cry—
A shoal of fiends came on me from the deep,
I hid, but in all corners they did pry,
And dragged me forth, and round did dance and leap;
They mouthed on me in dream, and tore me from sweet sleep.

"Strange constellations burned above my head,
Strange birds around the vessel shrieked and flew,
Strange shapes, like shadows, through the clear sea fled,
As our lone ship, wide-winged, came rippling through,
Angering to foam the smooth and sleeping blue."
The lady sighed, "Far, far upon the sea,
My own Sir Arthur, could I die with you!
The wind blows shrill between my love and me."
Fond heart! the space between was but the apple-tree.

There was a cry of joy; with seeking hands
She fled to him, like worn bird to her nest;
Like washing water on the figured sands,
His being came and went in sweet unrest,
As from the mighty shelter of his breast
The lady Barbara her head uprears
With a wan smile, "Methinks I 'm but half blest;
Now when I 've found thee, after weary years,
I cannot see thee, love! so blind I am with tears."

TO ——.

The broken moon lay in the autumn sky,
And I lay at thy feet;
You bent above me; in the silence I
Could hear my wild heart beat.

I spoke; my soul was full of trembling fears
At what my words would bring;
You raised your face, your eyes were full of tears,
As the sweet eyes of Spring.

You kissed me then, I worshipped at your feet
Upon the shadowy sod.
O fool! I loved thee! loved thee, lovely cheat!
Better than Fame or God.

My soul leaped up beneath thy timid kiss:
What then to me were groans,
Or pain, or death? Earth was a round of bliss,
I seemed to walk on thrones.

And you were with me 'mong the rushing wheels,
'Mid Trade's tumultuous jars,
And where to awe-struck wilds the night reveals
Her hollow gulfs of stars.

Before your window, as before a shrine,
I 've knelt 'mong dew-soaked flowers,
While distant music-bells, with voices fine,
Measured the midnight hours.

There came a fearful moment: I was pale,
You wept, and never spoke,
But clung around me as the woodbine frail
Clings, pleading, round an oak.

Upon my wrong I steadied up my soul,
And flung thee from myself;
I spurned thy love as 't were a rich man's dole—
It was my only wealth.

I spurned thee! I, who loved thee, could have died,
That hoped to call thee "wife,"
And bear thee, gently smiling at my side,
Through all the shocks of life!

Too late, thy fatal beauty and thy tears,
Thy vows, thy passionate breath;
I 'll meet thee not in life, nor in the spheres
Made visible by Death.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING;

OR,

TEN YEARS AFTER.

The country ways are full of mire,
The boughs toss in the fading light,
The winds blow out the sunset's fire,
And sudden droppeth down the night.
I sit in this familiar room,
Where mud-splashed hunting squires resort;
My sole companion in the gloom
This slowly-dying pint of port.

'Mong all the joys my soul hath known,
'Mong errors over which it grieves,
I sit at this dark hour alone,
Like autumn 'mid his withered leaves.
This is a night of wild farewells
To all the past, the good, the fair;
To-morrow, and my wedding-bells
Will make a music in the air.

Like a wet fisher tempest-tossed,
Who sees throughout the weltering night.

Digitized by Google

Afar on some low-lying coast
  The streaming of a rainy light,
I saw this hour—and now 't is come;
  The rooms are lit, the feast is set;
Within the twilight I am dumb,
  My heart filled with a vague regret.

I cannot say, in Eastern style,
  Where'er she treads the pansy blows;
Nor call her eyes twin-stars, her smile
  A sunbeam, and her mouth a rose.
Nor can I, as your bridegrooms do,
  Talk of my raptures. Oh, how sore
The fond romance of twenty-two
  Is parodied ere thirty-four!

To-night I shake hands with the past—
  Familiar years, adieu, adieu!
An unknown door is open cast,
  An empty future wide and new
Stands waiting. O ye naked rooms,
  Void, desolate, without a charm!
Will Love's smile chase your lonely glooms,
  And drape your walls, and make them warm?

The man who knew, while he was young,
  Some soft and soul-subduing air,
Melts when again he hears it sung,
  Although 't is only half so fair.
So love I thee, and love is sweet
  (My Florence, 't is the cruel truth)
Because it can to age repeat
  That long-lost passion of my youth.

Oh, often did my spirit melt,
  Blurred letters, o'er your artless rhymes!
Fair tress, in which the sunshine dwelt,
  I 've kissed thee many a million times!
And now 't is done.—My passionate tears,
  Mad pleadings with an iron fate,
And all the sweetness of my years,
  Are blackened ashes in the grate.

Then ring in the wind, my wedding-chimes;
  Smile, villagers, at every door;
Old churchyard, stuffed with buried crimes,
  Be clad in sunshine o'er and o'er;
And youthful maidens, white and sweet,
  Scatter your blossoms far and wide;
And with a bridal chorus greet
  This happy bridegroom and his bride.

"This happy bridegroom!" there is sin
  At bottom of my thankless mood:
What if desert alone could win
  For me life's chiefest grace and good?
Love gives itself; and if not given,
  No genius, beauty, state, or wit,
No gold of earth, no gem of heaven,
  Is rich enough to purchase it.

It may be, Florence, loving thee,
  My heart will its old memories keep;
Like some worn sea-shell from the sea,
  Filled with the music of the deep.
And you may watch, on nights of rain,
  A shadow on my brow encroach;
Be startled by my sudden pain,
  And tenderness of self-reproach.

It may be that your loving wiles
  Will call a sigh from far-off years;
It may be that your happiest smiles
  Will brim my eyes with hopeless tears;
It may be that my sleeping breath
  Will shake, with painful visions wrung;
And, in the awful trance of death,
  A stranger's name be on my tongue.

Ye phantoms, born of bitter blood,
  Ye ghosts of passion, lean and worn,
Ye terrors of a lonely mood,
  What do you here on a wedding morn?
For, as the dawning sweet and fast
  Through all the heaven spreads and flows,
Within life's discord rude and vast,
  Love's subtile music grows and grows.

And lightened is the heavy curse,
  And clearer is the weary road;
The very worm the sea-weeds nurse
  Is cared for by the Eternal God.
My love, pale blossom of the snow,
  Has pierced earth wet with wintry showers—
Oh, may it drink the sun, and blow,
  And be followed by all the year of flowers!

Black Bayard from the stable bring;
  The rain is o'er, the wind is down,
Round stirring farms the birds will sing,
  The dawn stand in the sleeping town,
Within an hour. This is her gate,
  Her sodden roses droop in night,
And—emblem of my happy fate—
  In one dear window there is light.

The dawn is oozing pale and cold
  Through the damp east for many a mile;
When half my tale of life is told
  Grim-featured Time begins to smile.
Last star of night that lingerest yet
  In that long rift of rainy gray,
Gather thy wasted splendors, set,
  And die into my wedding-day.

THE CHANGE.

"Oh! never, never can I call
  Another morning to my day,
And now through shade to shade I fall
  From afternoon to evening gray."
In bitterness these words I said,
  And lo! when I expected least—
For day was gone—a moonrise spread
  Its emerald radiance up the east.

By passion's gaudy candle-lights,
  I sat and watched the world's brave play;
Blown out—how poor the trains and sights
  Looked in the cruel light of day!
I cursed Man for his spaniel heart,
  His bounded brain, his lust of pelf—
Alas! each crime of field and mart
  Lived in a dark disease of self.

I saw the smiles and mean salaams
  Of slavish hearts; I heard the cry

Digitized by Google

Of maddened peoples throwing palms
  Before each cheered and timbreled lie.
I loathed the brazen front and brag
  Of bloated time; in self-defence
Withdrew I to my lonely crag,
  And fortress of indifference.

But Nature is revenged on those
  Who turn from her to lonely days:
Contentment, like the speedwell, blows
  Along the common-beaten ways.
The dead and thick green-mantled moats
  That gird my house resembled me,
Or some long-weeded hull that rots
  Upon a glazing tropic sea.

And madness ever round us lies,
  The final bourne and end of thought;
And Pleasure shuts her glorious eyes
  At one cold glance and melts to naught;
And Nature cannot hear us moan;
  She smiles in sunshine, raves in rain—
The music breathed by Love alone
  Can ease the world's immortal pain.

The sun forever hastes sublime,
  Waved onward by Orion's lance;
Obedient to the spheral chime,
  Across the world the seasons dance;
The flaming elements ne'er bewail
  Their iron bounds, their less or more;
The sea can drown a thousand sail,
  Yet rounds the pebbles on the shore.

I looked with pride on what I 'd done,
  I counted merits o'er anew,
In presence of the burning sun,
  Which drinks me like a drop of dew.
A lofty scorn I dared to shed
  On human passions, hopes, and jars,
I—standing on the countless dead,
  And pitied by the countless stars.

But mine is now a humbled heart,
  My lonely pride is weak as tears;
No more I seek to stand apart,
  A mocker of the rolling years.
Imprisoned in this wintry clime,
  I 've found enough, O Lord of breath—
Enough to plume the feet of time,
  Enough to hide the eyes of death.

SONNETS.

I CANNOT deem why men so toil for Fame.
A porter is a porter though his load
Be the oceaned world, and although his road
Be down the ages. What is in a name?
Ah! 't is our spirit's curse to strive and seek.
Although its heart is rich in pearls and ores,
The sea complains upon a thousand shores;
Sea-like we moan forever! We are weak.
We ever hunger for diviner stores:
I cannot say I have a thirsting deep
For human fame, nor is my spirit bowed
To be a mummy above-ground to keep
For stare and handling of the vulgar crowd,
Defrauded of my natural rest and sleep.

JOY like a stream flows through the Christmas-streets,
But I am sitting in my silent room,
Sitting all silent in congenial gloom.
To-night, while half the world the other greets
With smiles and grasping hands and drinks and meats,
I sit and muse on my poetic doom:
Like the dim scent within a budded rose
A joy is folded in my heart; and when
I think on poets nurtured 'mong the throes,
And by the lowly hearths of common men—
Think of their works, some song, some swelling ode
With gorgeous music growing to a close,
Deep-muffled as the dead-march of a god—
My heart is burning to be one of those.

I WROTE a Name upon the river-sands,
With her who bore it standing by my side,
Her large dark eyes lit up with gentle pride;
And leaning on my arm with claspèd hands,
To burning words of mine she thus replied:
"Nay, writ not on thy heart. This tablet frail
Fitteth as frail a vow. Fantastic bands
Will scarce confine these limbs." I turned love-pale,
I gazed upon the rivered landscape wide,
And thought how little *it* would all avail
Without her love. 'T was on a morn of May;
Within a month I stood upon the sand,
Gone was the name I traced with trembling hand—
And from my heart 't was also gone away.

SHEATHED is the river as it glideth by,
Frost-pearled are all the boughs in forest old,
The sheep are huddling close upon the wold,
And over them the stars tremble on high.
Pure joys these winter nights around me lie;
'T is fine to loiter through the lighted streets
At Christmas-time, and guess from brow and pace
The doom and history of each one we meet,
What kind of heart beats in each dusky case;
Whiles startled by the beauty of a face
In a shop-light a moment. Or instead,
To dream of silent fields where calm and deep
The sunshine lieth like a golden sleep—
Recalling sweetest looks of summers dead.

THERE have been vast displays of critic wit
O'er those who vainly flutter feeble wings,
Nor rise an inch 'bove-ground—weak poetlings!
And on them to the death men's brows are knit.
Ye men! ye critics! seems 't so very fit
They on a storm of laughter should be blown
O'er the world's edge to Limbo? Be it known,
Ye men! ye critics! that beneath the sun
The chiefest woe is this—When all alone,
And strong as life, a soul's great currents run
Poesy-ward, like rivers to the sea,
But never reach 't. Critic, let that soul moan
In its own hell without a kick from thee.
Kind Death, kiss gently, ease this weary one!

Digitized by Google

CHARLES S. CALVERLEY.

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY was born in 1831. He has published "Translations into English and Latin," 1866; "Verses and Translations," 1871; and "Fly Leaves," 1872. The latter two have passed through several editions in England, and the "Fly Leaves," together with all of the former volume except the translations, has been republished in New York. Edmund C. Stedman pronounces Calverley's complete rendition of Theocritus "undoubtedly as good as can be made by one who fears to undertake the original metres."

THE ARAB.

On, on, my brown Arab, away, away!
Thou hast trotted o'er many a mile to-day,
And I trow right meagre hath been thy fare
Since they roused thee at dawn from thy straw-piled lair,
To tread with those echoless unshod feet
Yon weltering flats in the noontide heat,
Where no palm-tree proffers a kindly shade,
And the eye never rests on a cool grass-blade;
And lank is thy flank, and thy frequent cough,
Oh! it goes to my heart—but away, friend, off!

And yet, ah! what sculptor who saw thee stand,
As thou standest now, on thy Native Strand,
With the wild wind ruffling thine uncombed hair,
And thy nostril upturned to the od'rous air,
Would not woo thee to pause, till his skill might trace
At leisure the lines of that eager face—
The collarless neck and the coal-black paws
And the bit grasped tight in the massive jaws;
The delicate curve of the legs, that seem
Too slight for their burden—and, oh, the gleam
Of that eye, so sombre and yet so gay?
Still away, my lithe Arab, once more away!

Nay, tempt me not, Arab, again to stay;
Since I crave neither *Echo* nor *Fun* to-day.
For thy *hand* is not echoless—there they are,
Fun, *Glowworm*, and *Echo*, and *Evening Star*,
And thou hintest withal that thou fain wouldst shine,
As I read them, these bulgy old boots of mine.
But I shrink from thee, Arab! Thou eat'st eel-pie,
Thou evermore hast at least one black eye;
There is brass on thy brow, and thy swarthy hues
Are due not to nature but handling shoes;
And the bit in thy mouth, I regret to see,
Is a bit of tobacco-pipe.—Flee, child, flee!

LINES ON HEARING THE ORGAN.

GRINDER, who serenely grindest
At my door the Hundredth Psalm,
Till thou ultimately findest
Pence in thine unwashen palm:

Grinder, jocund-hearted Grinder,
Near whom Barbary's nimble son,
Poised with skill upon his hinder
Paws, accepts the proffered bun:

Dearly do I love thy grinding;
Joy to meet thee on the road
Where thou prowlest through the blinding
Dust with that stupendous load—

Neath the baleful star of Sirius,
When the postmen slowlier jog,
And the ox becomes delirious,
And the muzzle decks the dog.

Tell me by what art thou bindest
On thy feet those ancient shoon:
Tell me, Grinder, if thou grindest
Always, always out of tune.

Tell me if, as thou art buckling
On thy straps with eager claws,
Thou forecastest, inly chuckling,
All the rage that thou wilt cause.

Tell me if at all thou mindest
When folks flee, as if on wings,
From thee as at ease thou grindest:
Tell me fifty thousand things.

Grinder, gentle-hearted Grinder!
Ruffians who led evil lives,
Soothed by thy sweet strains are kinder
To their bullocks and their wives:

Digitized by Google

Children, when they see thy supple
  Form approach, are out like shots;
Half a bar sets several couple
  Waltzing in convenient spots;

Not with clumsy Jacks or Georges:
  Unprofaned by grasp of man
Maidens speed those simple orgies,
  Betsey Jane with Betsey Ann.

As they love thee in St. Giles's
  Thou art loved in Grosvenor Square:
None of those engaging smiles is
  Unreciprocated there.

Often, ere thou yet hast hammered
  Through thy four delicious airs,
Coins are flung thee by enamored
  Housemaids upon area-stairs:

E'en the ambrosial-whiskered flunkey
  Eyes thy boots and thine unkempt
Beard and melancholy monkey
  More in pity than contempt.

Far from England, in the sunny
  South, where Anio leaps in foam,
Thou wast reared, till lack of money
  Drew thee from thy vine-clad home:

And thy mate, the sinewy Jocko,
  From Brazil or Afric came,
Land of simoom and sirocco—
  And he seems extremely tame.

There he quaffed the undefilèd
  Spring, or hung with ape-like glee,
By his teeth or tail or eyelid,
  To the slippery mango-tree:

There he wooed and won a dusky
  Bride, of instincts like his own;
Talked of love till he was husky
  In a tongue to us unknown:

Side by side 't was theirs to ravage
  The potato-ground, or cut
Down the unsuspecting savage
  With the well-aimed cocoa-nut:

Till the miscreant Stranger tore him
  Screaming from his blue-faced fair;
And they flung strange raiment o'er him—
  Raiment which he could not bear.

Severed from the pure embraces
  Of his children and his spouse,
He must ride fantastic races
  Mounted on reluctant sows:

But the heart of wistful Jocko
  Still was with his ancient flame
In the nut-groves of Morocco;
  Or if not it 's all the same.

Grinder, winsome grinsome Grinder!
  They who see thee and whose soul
Melts not at thy charms, are blinder
  Than a trebly-bandaged mole:

They to whom thy curt (yet clever)
  Talk, thy music and thine ape,
Seem not to be joyous forever,
  Are but brutes in human shape.

'T is not that thy mien is stately,
  'T is not that thy tones are soft;
'T is not that I care so greatly
  For the same thing played so oft:

But I 've heard mankind abuse thee
  And perhaps it 's rather strange,
But I thought that I would choose thee
  For encomium, as a change.

FIRST LOVE.

O MY earliest love, who, ere I numbered
  Ten sweet summers, made my bosom thrill!
Will a swallow—or a swift, or some bird—
  Fly to her and say, I love her still?

Say my life 's a desert drear and arid,
  To its one green spot I aye recur:
Never, never—although three times married—
  Have I cared a jot for aught but her.

No, mine own! though early forced to leave you,
  Still my heart was there where first we met;
In those "Lodgings with an ample sea-view,"
  Which were, forty years ago, "To Let."

There I saw her first, our landlord's oldest
  Little daughter. On a thing so fair
Thou, O Sun—who (so they say) beholdest
  Everything—hast gazed, I tell thee, ne'er.

There she sat—so near me, yet remoter
  Than a star—a blue-eyed bashful imp:
On her lap she held a happy bloater,
  'Twixt her lips a yet more happy shrimp.

And I loved her, and our troth we plighted
  On the morrow by the shingly shore;
In a fortnight to be disunited
  By a bitter fate for evermore.

O my own, my beautiful, my blue-eyed!
  To be young once more, and bite my thumb
At the world and all its cares with you, I 'd
  Give no inconsiderable sum.

Hand in hand we tramped the golden seaweed,
  Soon as o'er the gray cliff peeped the dawn:
Side by side, when came the hour for tea, we 'd
  Crunch the mottled shrimp and hairy prawn:—

Has she wedded some gigantic shrimper,
  That sweet mite with whom I loved to play?
Is she girt with babes that whine and whimper,
  That bright being who was always gay?

Yes—she has at least a dozen wee things!
  Yes—I see her darning corduroys,
Scouring floors, and setting out the tea-things,
  For a howling herd of hungry boys,

Digitized by Google

In a home that reeks of tar and sperm-oil!
But at intervals she thinks, I know,
Of these days which we, afar from turmoil,
Spent together forty years ago.

O my earliest love, still unforgotten,
With your downcast eyes of dreamy blue!
Never, somehow, could I seem to cotton
To another as I did to you!

SAD MEMORIES.

They tell me I am beautiful; they praise my silken hair,
My little feet that silently slip on from stair to stair:
They praise my pretty trustful face and innocent gray eye;
Fond hands caress me oftentimes—yet would that I might die!

Why was I born to be abhorred of man and bird and beast?
The bulfinch marks me stealing by, and straight his song hath ceased;
The shrewmouse eyes me shudderingly, then flees; and worse than that,
The house-dog he flies after me—why was I born a cat?

Men prize the heartless hound who quits dry-eyed his native land:
Who wags a mercenary tail and licks a tyrant hand.
The leal true cat they prize not, that if e'er compelled to roam
Still flies, when let out of the bag, precipitately home.

They call me cruel. Do I know if mouse or song-bird feels?
I only know they make me light and salutary meals:
And if, as 't is my nature to, ere I devour I tease 'em,
Why should a low-bred gardener's boy pursue me with a besom?

Should china fall or chandeliers, or anything but stocks—
Nay, stocks, when they 're in flower-pots—the cat expects hard knocks:
Should ever anything be missed—milk, coals, umbrellas, brandy—
The cat's pitched into with a boot or anything that 's handy.

I remember, I remember, how one night I fleeted by,
And gained the blessed tiles and gazed into the cold clear sky.
I remember, I remember, how my various lovers came;
And there, beneath the crescent moon, played many a little game.

They fought—by good St. Catharine, 't was a fearsome sight to see
The coal-black crest, the glowering orbs, of one gigantic He!
Like bow by some tall bowman bent at Hastings or Poictiers,
His huge back curved, till none observed a vestige of his ears:

He stood, an ebon crescent, flouting yon ivory moon;
Then raised the pibroch of his race, the Song without a Tune:
Gleamed his white teeth, his mammoth tail waved darkly to and fro,
As with one complex yell he burst, all claws, upon the foe.

It thrills me now, that final Miaow—that weird unearthly din:
Lone maidens heard it far away, and leaped out of their skin.
A pot-boy from his den o'erhead peeped with a scared, wan face;
Then sent a random brickbat down, which knocked me into space.

Nine days I fell, or thereabouts: and, had we not nine lives,
I wis I ne'er had seen again thy sausage-shop, St. Ives!
Had I, as some cats have, nine tails, how gladly I would lick
The hand, and person generally, of him who heaved that brick!

For me they fill the milk-bowl up, and cull the choice sardine:
But ah! I nevermore shall be the cat I once have been!
The memories of that fatal night they haunt me even now:
In dreams I see that rampant He, and tremble at that Miaow.

BALLAD.

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*),
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.

The piper he piped on the hill-top high,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*),
Till the cow said "I die," and the goose asked "Why?"
And the dog said nothing, but searched for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard—
The connection of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

Digitized by Google

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
If you try to approach her, away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

PART II.

She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*),
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.

She sat with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her best chemise.

She sat with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*),
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she followed him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep followed her, as their tails did them
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*);
And this song is considered a perfect gem,
And as to the meaning, it 's what you please.

THE SCHOOLMASTER ABROAD WITH HIS SON.

O WHAT harper could worthily harp it,
Mine Edward! this wide-stretching wold
(Look out *wold*) with its wonderful carpet
Of emerald, purple, and gold!
Look well at it—also look sharp, it
Is getting so cold.

The purple is heather (*erica*);
The yellow, gorse—called sometimes "whin."
Cruel boys on its prickles might spike a
Green beetle as if on a pin.
You may roll in it, if you would like a
Few holes in your skin.

You would n't? Then think of how kind you
Should be to the insects who crave
Your compassion—and then, look behind you
At yon barley-ears! Don't they look brave
As they undulate?—(*undulate*, mind you,
From *unda*, *a wave*).

The noise of those sheep-bells, how faint it
Sounds here—(on account of our height)!
And this hillock itself—who could paint it,
With its changes of shadow and light?
Is it not—(never, Eddy, say "ain't it")—
A marvellous sight?

Then yon desolate eerie morasses,
The haunts of the snipe and the hern
(I shall question the two upper classes
On *aquatiles* when we return)—
Why, I see on them absolute masses
Of *filix* or fern.

How it interests e'en a beginner
(Or tyro) like dear little Ned!
Is he listening? As I am a sinner
He 's asleep—he is wagging his head.
Wake up! I 'll go home to my dinner,
And you to your bed.

The boundless ineffable prairie;
The splendor of mountain and lake
With their hues that seem ever to vary;
The mighty pine-forests which shake
In the wind, and in which the unwary
May tread on a snake;

And this wold with its heathery garment—
Are themes undeniably great.
But—although there is not any harm in 't—
It 's perhaps little good to dilate
On their charms to a dull little varmint
Of seven or eight.

UNDER THE TREES.

"UNDER the trees!" Who but agrees
That there is magic in words such as these?
Promptly one sees shake in the breeze
Stately lime-avenues haunted of bees:
Where, looking far over butter-cupped leas,
Lads and "fair shes" (that is Byron, and he 's
An authority) lie very much at their ease;
Taking their teas, or their duck and green peas,
Or, if they prefer it, their plain bread and cheese:
Not objecting at all, though it 's rather a squeeze
And the glass is I dare say at eighty degrees.
Some get up glees, and are mad about Ries
And Sainton, and Tamberlik's thrilling high Cs;
Or if painter, hold forth upon Hunt and Maclise,
And the tone and the breadth of that landscape of Lee's;
Or if learned, on nodes and the moon's apogees,
Or, if serious, on something of AKHB's,
Or the latest attempt to convert the Chaldees;
Or in short about all things, from earthquakes to fleas.
Some sit in twos or (less frequently) threes,
With their innocent lamb's-wool or book on their knees,
And talk, and enact, any nonsense you please,
As they gaze into eyes that are blue as the seas;
And you hear an occasional "Harry, don't tease,"
From the sweetest of lips in the softest of keys,
And other remarks, which to me are Chinese.
And fast the time flees; till a lady-like sneeze,
Or a portly papa's more elaborate wheeze,
Makes Miss Tabitha seize on her brown muffatees,
And announce as a fact that it's going to freeze,
And that young people ought to attend to their Ps
And their Qs and not court every form of disease:
Then Tommy eats up the three last ratifias,
And pretty Louise wraps her robe de cerise

Digitized by Google

Round a bosom as tender as Widow Machree's,
And (in spite of the pleas of her lorn *vis-à-vis*)
Goes and wraps up her uncle—a patient of Skey's
Who is prone to catch chills, like all old Bengalese:
But at bedtime I trust he 'll remember to grease
The bridge of his nose, and preserve his rupees
From the premature clutch of his fond legatees;
Or at least have no fees to pay any M. D.s
For the cold his niece caught sitting under the trees.

MOTHERHOOD.

She laid it where the sunbeams fall
Unscanned upon the broken wall.
Without a tear, without a groan,
She laid it near a mighty stone,
Which some rude swain had haply cast
Thither in sport, long ages past,
And Time with mosses had o'erlaid,
And fenced with many a tall grass-blade,
And all about bid roses bloom
And violets shed their soft perfume.
There, in its cool and quiet bed,
She set her burden down and fled:
Nor flung, all eager to escape,
One glance upon the perfect shape
That lay, still warm and fresh and fair,
But motionless and soundless there.

No human eye had marked her pass
Across the linden-shadowed grass
Ere yet the minster-clock chimed seven:
Only the innocent birds of heaven—
The magpie, and the rook whose nest
Swings as the elm-tree waves his crest—
And the lithe cricket, and the hoar
And huge-limbed hound that guards the door,
Looked on when, as a summer wind
That, passing, leaves no trace behind,
All unparelled, barefoot all,
She ran to that old ruined wall
To leave upon the chill dank earth
(For ah! she never knew its worth)
'Mid hemlock rank, and fern, and ling,
And dews of night, that precious thing!

And there it might have lain forlorn
From morn till eve, from eve to morn:
But that, by some wild impulse led,
The mother, ere she turned and fled,
One moment stood erect and high;
Then poured into the silent sky
A cry so jubilant, so strange,
That Alice—as she strove to range
Her rebel ringlets at her glass—
Sprang up and gazed across the grass;
Shook back those curls so fair to see,
Clapped her soft hands in childish glee;
And shrieked—her sweet face all aglow,
Her very limbs with rapture shaking—
"My hen has laid an egg, I know;
And only hear the noise she 's making!"

FLIGHT.

O Memory! that which I gave thee
To guard in thy garner yestreen—
Little deeming thou e'er couldst behave thee
Thus basely—hath gone from thee clean!
Gone, fled, as ere autumn is ended
The yellow leaves flee from the oak—
I have lost it forever, my splendid
Original joke.

What was it? I know I was brushing
My hair when the notion occurred:
I know that I felt myself blushing
As I thought, "How supremely absurd!
How they 'll hammer on floor and on table
As its drollery dawns on them—how
They will quote it"—I wish I were able
To quote it just now.

I had thought to lead up conversation
To the subject—it 's easily done—
Then let off, as an airy creation
Of the moment, that masterly pun.
Let it off, with a flash like a rocket's;
In the midst of a dazzled conclave,
While I sat, with my hands in my pockets,
The only one grave.

I had fancied young Titterton's chuckles,
And old Bottleby's hearty guffaws
As he drove at my ribs with his knuckles,
His mode of expressing applause:
While Jean Bottleby—queenly Miss Janet—
Drew her handkerchief hastily out,
In fits at my slyness—what can it
Have all been about?

I know 't was the happiest, quaintest
Combination of pathos and fun:
But I 've got no idea—the faintest—
Of what was the actual pun.
I think it was somehow connected
With something I 'd recently read—
Or heard—or perhaps recollected
On going to bed.

What *had* I been reading? The *Standard:*
"Double Bigamy;" "Speech of the mayor."
And later—eh? yes! I meandered
Through some chapters of "Vanity Fair."
How it fuses the grave with the festive!
Yet e'en there, there is nothing so fine—
So playfully, subtly suggestive—
As that joke of mine.

Did it hinge upon "parting asunder?"
No, I don't part my hair with my brush.
Was the point of it "hair?" Now I wonder!
Stop a bit—I shall think of it—hush!
There 's *hare*, a wild animal.—Stuff!
It was something a deal more recondite:
Of that I am certain enough;
And of nothing beyond it.

Hair—*locks!* There are probably many
Good things to be said about those.
Give me time—that 's the best guess of any—
"Lock" has several meanings, one knows.

Digitized by Google

Iron locks—*iron-gray locks*—a "deadlock"
That would set up an every-day wit:
Then of course there 's the obvious "wedlock;"
But that was n't it.

No! mine was a joke for the ages;
Full of intricate meaning and pith;
A feast for your scholars and sages—
How it would have rejoiced Sydney Smith!
'T is such thoughts that ennoble a mortal;
And, singling him out from the herd,
Fling wide immortality's portal—
But what was the word?

Ah me! 't is a bootless endeavor.
As the flight of a bird of the air
Is the flight of a joke—you will never
See the same one again, you may swear.
'T was my first-born, and oh! how I prized it!
My darling, my treasure, my own!
This brain and none other devised it—
And now it has flown.

LOVERS, AND A REFLECTION.

In moss-pranked dells which the sunbeams flatter
(And heaven it knoweth what that may mean;
Meaning, however, is no great matter),
Where woods are a-tremble, with rifts atween;

Through God's own heather we wonned together,
I and my Willie (O love my love):
I need hardly remark it was glorious weather,
And flitterbats wavered alow, above:

Boats were curtseying, rising, bowing,
(Boats in that climate are so polite),
And sands were a ribbon of green endowing,
And oh, the sun-dazzle on bark and bight!

Through the rare red heather we danced together,
(O love my Willie!) and smelt for flowers:
I must mention again it was gorgeous weather,
Rhymes are so scarce in this world of ours:

By rises that flushed with their purple favors,
Through becks that brattled o'er grasses sheen
We walked or waded, we two young shavers,
Thanking our stars we were both so green.

We journeyed in parallels, I and Willie,
In fortunate parallels! Butterflies,
Hid in weltering shadows of daffodilly
Or marjoram, kept making peacock-eyes:

Song-birds darted about, some inky
As coal, some snowy (I ween) as curds;
Or rosy as pinks, or as roses pinky—
They reck of no eerie To-come, those birds!

But they skim over bents which the mill-stream washes,
Or hand in the lift 'neath a white cloud's hem;
They need no parasols, no goloshes;
And good Mrs. Trimmer she feedeth them.

Then we thrid God's cowslips (as erst His heather)
That endowed the wan grass with their golden blooms;
And snap—(it was perfectly charming weather)—
Our fingers at Fate and her goddess-glooms:

And Willie 'gan sing—(oh, his notes were fluty;
Wafts fluttered them out to the white-winged sea)—
Something made up of rhymes that have done much duty,
Rhymes (better to put it) of "ancientry:"

Bowers of flowers encounted showers
In William's carol—(O love my Willie!)—
Then he bade sorrow borrow from blithe to-morrow
I quite forget what—say a daffodilly:

A nest in a hollow, "with buds to follow,"
I think occurred next in his nimble strain;
And clay that was "kneaden" of course in Eden—
A rhyme most novel, I do maintain:

Mists, bones, the singer himself, love-stories,
And all least furlable things got "furled;"
Not with any design to conceal their glories,
But simply and solely to rhyme with "world."

. . . . . .

Oh, if billows and pillows and hours and flowers,
And all the brave rhymes of an elder day,
Could be furled together, this genial weather,
And carted, or carried, on wafts away,
Nor ever again trotted out—ay me!
How much fewer volumes of verse there 'd be!

THE COCK AND THE BULL.

You see this pebble-stone? It 's a thing I bought
Of a bit of a chit of a boy i' the mid o' the day—
I like to dock the smaller parts-o'-speech,
As we curtail the already cur-tailed cur
(You catch the paronomasia, play o' words?)—
Did, rather, i' the pre-Landseerian days.
Well, to my muttons. I purchased the concern,
And clapped it i' my poke, and gave for same
By way, to wit, of barter or exchange—
"Chop" was my snickering dandiprat's own term—
One shilling and fourpence, current coin o' the realm.
O-n-e one and f-o-u-r four
Pence, one and fourpence—you are with me, sir?—
What hour it skills not: ten or eleven o' the clock,
One day (and what a roaring day it was!)
In February, eighteen sixty-nine,
Alexandrina Victoria, Fidei—
Hm—hm—how runs the jargon?—being on throne.

Such, sir, are all the facts, succinctly put,
The basis or substratum—what you will—
Of the impending eighty thousand lines.

Digitized by Google

"Not much in 'em either," quoth perhaps simple Hodge.
But there 's a superstructure. Wait a bit.

Mark first the rationale of the thing:
Hear logic rivel and levigate the deed.
That shilling—and, for matter o' that, the pence—
I had o' course upo' me—wi' me say—
(*Mecum* 's the Latin, make a note o' that)
When I popped pen i' stand, blew snout, scratched ear,
Sniffed—tch!—at snuff-box; tumbled up, hee-heed,
Haw-hawed (not hee-hawed, that 's another guess thing):
Then fumbled at, and stumble out of, door,
I shoved the door ope wi' my omoplat;
And *in vestibulo*, i' the entrance-hall,
Donned galligaskins, antigropeloes,
And so forth; and, complete with hat and gloves,
One on and one a-dangle i' my hand,
And ombrifuge (Lord love you!), case o' rain,
I flopped forth, 'sbudddikins! on my own ten toes,
(I do assure you there be ten of them),
And went clump-clumping up-hill and down-dale
To find myself o' the sudden i' front o' the boy.
Put case I had n't 'em on me, could I ha' bought
This sort-o'-kind-o'-what-you-might-call toy,
This pebble-thing, o' the boy-thing? Q. E. D.

That 's proven without aid from mumping Pope,
Sleek porporate or bloated Cardinal.
(Is n't it, old Fatchaps? You 're in Euclid now.)
So, having the shilling—having i' fact a lot—
And pence and halfpence, ever so many o' them,
I purchased, as I think I said before,
The pebble (*lapis, lapidis, -di, -dem, -de*—
What nouns 'crease short i' the genitive, Fatchaps, eh?)
O' the boy, a barelegged beggarly son of a gun,
For one and fourpence. Here we are again.

Now Law steps in, big-wigged, voluminous-jawed;
Investigates and reinvestigates.
Was the transaction illegal? Law shakes head
Perpend, sir, all the bearings of the case.

At first the coin was mine, the chattel his.
But now (by virtue of the said exchange
And barter) *vice versa* all the coin,
Per juris operationem, vests
I' the boy and his assigns till ding o' doom
(*In sæcula sæculo-o-o-orum;*
I think I hear the Abate mouth out that),
To have and hold the same to him and them...
Confer some idiot on Conveyancing.
Whereas the pebble and every part thereof,
And all that appertaineth thereunto,
Or shall, will, may, might, can, could, would, or should,
(*Subaudi cætera*—clap we to the close—
For what 's the good of law in a case o' the kind?)
Is mine to all intents and purposes.
This settled, I resume the thread o' the tale.

Now for a touch o' the vendor's quality.
He says a gen'l'man bought a pebble of him,
(This pebble i' sooth, sir, which I hold i' my hand)—
And paid for 't, *like* a gen'l'man, on the nail.
"Did I o'ercharge him a ha'penny? Devil a bit.
Fiddlestick's end! Get out, you blazing ass!
Gabble o' the goose. Don't bugaboo-baby *me!*
Go double or quits? Yah! tittup! what 's the odds?"
—There's the transaction viewed i' the vendor's light.

Next ask that dumpled hag, stood snuffling by,
With her three frowsy-blowsy brats o' babes,
The scum o' the kennel, cream o' the filth-heap—Faugh!
Aie, aie, aie, aie! ὀτοτοτοτοῖ,
('Stead which we blurt out Hoighty-toighty, now)—
And the baker and candlestick-maker, and Jack and Gill,
Bleared Goody this and queasy Gaffer that.
Ask the schoolmaster. Take schoolmaster first.

He saw a gentleman purchase of a lad
A stone, and pay for it *rite*, on the square,
And carry it off *per saltum*, jauntily,
Propria quæ maribus, gentleman's property now
(Agreeable to the law explained above),
In proprium usum, for his private ends.
The boy he chucked a brown i' the air, and bit
I' the face the shilling: heaved a thumping stone
At a lean hen that ran cluck-clucking by,
(And hit her, dead as nail i' post o' door),
Then *abiit*—what's the Ciceronian phrase?—
Excessit, evasit, erupit—off slogs boy;
Off in three flea-skips. *Hactenus*, so far,
So good, *tam bene. Bene, satis, male*—
Where was I? who said what of one in a quag?
I did once hitch the syntax into verse:
Verbum personale, a verb personal,
Concordat—ay, "agrees," old Fatchaps—*cum Nominativo*, with its nominative,
Genere, i' point o' gender, *numero*,
O' number, *et persona*, and person. *Ut*,
Instance: *Sol ruit*, down flops sun, *et*, and,
Montes umbrantur, snuffs out mountains. Pah!
Excuse me, sir, I think I 'm going mad.
You see the trick on 't though, and can yourself
Continue the discourse *ad libitum*.
It takes up about eighty thousand lines,
A thing imagination boggles at:
And might, odds-bobs, sir! in judicious hands,
Extend from here to Mesopotamy.

GEMINI AND VIRGO.

Some vast amount of years ago,
Ere all my youth had vanished from me,
A boy it was my lot to know,
Whom his familiar friends called Tommy.

I love to gaze upon a child;
A young bud bursting into blossom;
Artless, as Eve yet unbeguiled,
And agile as a young opossum:

Digitized by Google

And such was he. A calm-browed lad,
  Yet mad, at moments, as a hatter:
Why hatters as a race are mad
  I never knew, nor does it matter.

He was what nurses call a "limb;"
  One of those small misguided creatures
Who, though their intellects are dim,
  Are one too many for their teachers:

And, if you asked of him to say
  What twice 10 was, or 3 times 7,
He 'd glance (in quite a placid way)
  From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And smile, and look politely round,
  To catch a casual suggestion;
But make no effort to propound
  Any solution of the question.

And so not much esteemed was he
  Of the authorities: and therefore
He fraternized by chance with me,
  Needing a somebody to care for.

And three fair summers did we twain
  Live (as they say) and love together;
And bore by turns the wholesome cane
  Till our young skins became as leather:

And carved our names on every desk,
  And tore our clothes, and inked our collars;
And looked unique and picturesque,
  But not, it may be, model scholars,

We did much as we chose to do;
  We 'd never heard of Mrs. Grundy;
All the theology we knew
  Was that we might n't play on Sunday;

And all the general truths, that cakes
  Were to be bought at four a penny,
And that excruciating aches
  Resulted if we ate too many:

And seeing ignorance is bliss,
  And wisdom consequently folly,
The obvious result is this—
  That our two lives were very jolly.

At last the separation came.
  Real love at that time was the fashion;
And by a horrid chance, the same
  Young thing was, to us both, a passion.

Old Poser snorted like a horse:
  His feet were large, his hands were pimply,
His manner, when excited, coarse:—
  But Miss P. was an angel simply.

She was a blushing gushing thing;
  All—more than all—my fancy painted;
Once—when she helped me to a wing
  Of goose—I thought I should have fainted.

The people said that she was blue:
  But I was green, and loved her dearly.
She was approaching thirty-two;
  And I was then eleven, nearly.

I did not love as others do;
  (None ever did that I 've heard tell of);
My passion was a byword through
  The town she was, of course, the belle of:

Oh, sweet—as to the toil-worn man
  The far-off sound of rippling river:
As to cadets in Hindostan
  The fleeting remnant of their liver—

To me was Anna; dear as gold
  That fills the miser's sunless coffers;
As to the spinster, growing old,
  The thought — the dream — that she had offers.

I 'd sent her little gifts of fruit;
  I 'd written lines to her as Venus;
I 'd sworn unflinchingly to shoot
  The man who dared to come between us:

And it was you, my Thomas, you,
  The friend in whom my soul confided,
Who dared to gaze on her—to do,
  I may say, much the same as I did.

One night, I *saw* him squeeze her hand;
  There was no doubt about the matter;
I said he must resign, or stand
  My vengeance—and he chose the latter.

We met, we "planted" blows on blows:
  We fought as long as we were able;
My rival had a bottle-nose,
  And both my speaking eyes were sable.

When the school-bell cut short our strife
  Miss P. gave both of us a plaster;
And in a week became the wife
  Of Horace Nibbs, the writing-master.

. . . . .

I loved her then—I 'd love her still,
  Only one must not love Another's;
But thou and I, my Tommy, will,
  When we again meet, meet as brothers.

It may be that in age one seeks
  Peace only: that the blood is brisker
In boys' veins than in theirs whose cheeks
  Are partially obscured by whisker;

Or that the growing ages steal
  The memories of past wrongs from us.
But this is certain—that I feel
  Most friendly unto thee, O Thomas!

And wheresoe'er we meet again,
  On this or that side the equator,
If I've not turned teetotaller then,
  And have wherewith to pay the waiter,

To thee I 'll drain the modest cup,
  Ignite with thee the mild Havana;
And we will waft, while liquoring up,
  Forgiveness to the heartless Anna.

Digitized by Google

ROBERT BULWER-LYTTON.

(OWEN MEREDITH.)

EDWARD ROBERT BULWER-LYTTON is a son of Bulwer the novelist (Lord Lytton), and was born November 8, 1831. He was educated first by private tutors, was then sent to Harrow, and afterward studied in Rome. In 1849 his uncle Sir Henry Bulwer (afterward Baron Dalling and Bulwer) was appointed British Minister at Washington, and Robert accompanied him as private secretary. Sir Henry was transferred to Florence in 1852; and after going thither with him, Robert was an attaché successively of the British legations at The Hague, Vienna, Lisbon, Madrid, Copenhagen, and Paris. He succeeded to his father's title and estates in January, 1873, and in March, 1876, was appointed Governor-General of India.

He published in 1856, "Clytemnestra, and other Poems," the title-piece being a drama in the Greek form; in 1859, "The Wanderer, a Collection of Poems in Many Lands;" in 1860, "Lucile," a novel in verse; in 1861, "Serbski Pesme," a collection of Servian songs; in 1868, "Chronicles and Characters," consisting largely of legendary tales; and in 1869, "Orval, or the Fool of Time," a dramatic poem based on "The Undivine Comedy" of Count Sigismund Krasinski. The late Martha Walker Cook published a literal translation of this drama in the "Continental Monthly," of which she was editor, in 1864, and her translation appeared in book form in Philadelphia in 1875. Bulwer had said in the preface of "Orval" that he had never seen the Polish poem, that he did not know the name of its author, and that he had simply used an analysis of it which he found in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Mrs. Cook, in a long communication to the "New York Times," accused Bulwer of knowing more than he acknowledged of the Polish poem, and of borrowing quite too liberally from Krasinski, and cited numerous parallel passages. Years before, the singular resemblance between his "Bird at Sunset" and Bryant's "Lines to a Waterfowl" had been commented upon. That he has occasionally borrowed from other poets, consciously or unconsciously, is not to be disputed; nevertheless he is so truly a poet that he has little need of borrowing, and is entitled to the best construction which it is possible to put upon any such resemblances. His only prose work is "The Ring of Amasis," a novel, published in 1863. All of his works have appeared under the *nom de plume* of "Owen Meredith," this being a family name on his mother's side.

NIGHT.

FROM THE PROLOGUE TO THE WANDERER.

NURSE of an ailing world, belovèd Night!
  Our days are fretful children, weak to bear
A little pain: they wrangle, wound, and fight
  Each other, weep, and sicken, and despair.
Thou, with thy motherly hand that healeth care,
  Stillest our little noise: rebukest one,
  Soothest another: blamest tasks undone:
Refreshest jaded hope; and teachest prayer.

Thine is the mother's sweet hush-hush, that stills
  The flutterings of a plaintive heart to rest.
Thine is the mother's medicining hand that fills
  Sleep's opiate: thine the mother's patient breast:
Thine, too, the mother's mute reproachful eyes,
  That gently look our angry noise to shame
  When all is done: we dare not meet their blame:
They are so silent, and they are so wise.

Thou that from this lone casement, while I write,
  Seen in the shadowy upspring, swift dost post
Without a sound the polar star to light,
  Not idly did the Chaldee shepherds boast
By thy stern lights man's life aright to read.
  All day he hides himself from his own heart,
  Swaggers and struts, and plays his foolish part:
Thou only seest him as he is indeed.

For who could feign false worth, or give the nod
  Among his fellows, or this dust disown,
With naught between him and those lights of God,
  Left awfully alone with the Alone?
Who vaunt high words, whose least heart's beating jars
  The hush of sentinel worlds that take mute note
  Of all beneath yon judgment plains remote?—
A universal cognizance of stars!

Digitized by Google

And yet, O gentlest angel of the Lord!
  Thou leadest by the hand the artisan
Away from work. Thou bringest, on ship-board,
  When gleam the dead-lights, to the lonely man
That turns the wheel, a blessèd memory
  Of apple-blossoms, and the mountain-vales
  About his little cottage in green Wales,
Miles o'er the ridges of the rolling sea.

Thou bearest divine forgiveness among men.
  Relenting Anger pauses by the bed
Where Sleep looks so like Death. The absent then
  Return; and Memory beckons back the dead.
Thou helpest home (thy balmy hand it is!)
  The hard-worked husband to the pale-cheeked wife,
  And hushest up the poor day's household strife,
On marriage-pillows, with a good-night kiss.

Thou bringest to the wretched and forlorn
  Woman, that down the glimmering by-street hovers,
A dream of better days: the gleam of corn
  About her father's field, and her first lover's
Grave, long forgotten in the green churchyard:
  Voices, long-stilled, from purer hours, before
  The rushlight, Hope, went out; and, through the door
Of the lone garret, when the nights were hard,

Hunger, the wolf, put in his paw, and found her
  Sewing the winding-sheet of youth, alone;
And griped away the last cold comforts round her:—
  Her little bed: the mean clothes she had on:
Her mother's picture—the sole saint she knew:
  Till nothing else was left for the last crust
  But the poor body, and the heart's young trust
In its own courage: and so these went too.

Home from the heated ball flushed beauty stands,
  Musing beside her costly couch alone:
But while she loosens, faint, with jewelled hands,
  The diamonds from her dark hair, one by one,
Thou whisperest in her empty heart the name
  Of one that died heart-broken for her sake
  Long since, and all at once the coiled hell-snake
Turns stinging in his egg—and pomp is shame.

Thou comest to the man of many pleasures
  Without a joy, that, soulless, plays for souls,
Whose life's a squandered heap of plundered treasures,
  While, listless loitering by, the moment rolls,
From nothing on to nothing. From the shelf
  Perchance he takes a cynic book. Perchance
  A dead flower stains the leaves. The old romance
Returns. Ere morn, perchance, he shoots himself.

Thou comest, with a touch of scorn, to me,
  That o'er the broken wine-cup of my youth
Sit brooding here, and pointest silently
  To thine unchanging stars. Yes! yes! in truth,
They seem more reachless now than when of yore
  Above the promised land I watched them shine,
  And all among their cryptic serpentine
Went climbing Hope, new planets to explore.

Not for the flesh that fades—although decay
  This thronged metropolis of sense o'erspread:
Not for the joys of youth, that fleet away
  When the wise swallows to the south are fled;
Not that, beneath the law which fades the flower,
  An earthly hope should wither in the cells
  Of this poor earthly house of life, where dwells
Unseen the solitary Thinking-Power;

But that where fades the flower the weed should flourish;
  For all the baffled efforts to achieve
The imperishable from the things that perish,
  For broken vows, and weakened will, I grieve.
Knowing that night of all is creeping on
  Wherein can no man work, I sorrow most
  For what is gained, and not for what is lost;
Nor mourn alone what 's undone, but what 's done.

What light, from yonder windless cloud released,
  Is widening up the peaks of yon black hills?
It is the full moon in the mystic east,
  Whose coming half the unravished darkness fills;
Till all among the ribbed light cloudlets pale,
  From shore to shore of sapph'rine deeps divine,
  The orbèd splendor seems to slide and shine
Aslope the rolling vapors in the vale.

Abroad the stars majestic light is flung,
  And they fade brightening up the steps of Night.
Cold mysteries of the midnight! that, among
  The sleeps and pauses of this world, in sight,
Reveal a doubtful hope to wild Desire;
  Which, hungering for the sources of the suns,
  Makes moan beyond the blue Septentrions,
And spidery Saturn in his webs of fire;

Whether the unconscious destinies of man
  Move with the motions of your spherèd lights,
And his brief course, foredoomed ere he began,
  Your shining symbols fixed in reachless heights,
Or whether all the purpose of his pain
  Be shut in his wild heart and feverish will,
  He knows no more than this:—that you are still,
But he is moved: he goes, but you remain.

Fooled was the human vanity that wrote
  Strange names in astral fire on yonder pole.
Who and what were they—in what age remote—
  That scrawled weak boasts on yon sidereal scroll?

Digitized by Google

Orion shines. Now seek for Nimrod. Where?
  Osiris is a fable, and no more:
  But Sirius burns as brightly as of yore.
There is no shade on Berenice's hair.

You that outlast the pyramids, as they
  Outlast their founders, tell us of our doom!
You that see Love depart, and Error stray,
  And Genius toiling at a splendid tomb,
Like those Egyptian slaves: and Hope deceived:
  And Strength still failing when the goal is near:
  And Passion parched: and Rapture clasped to Fear:
And Trust betrayed: and Memory bereaved!

Vain question! Shall some other voice declare
  What my soul knows not of herself? Ah, no!
Dumb, patient monster, grieving everywhere,
  Thou answerest nothing which I did not know.
The broken fragments of ourselves we seek
  In alien forms, and leave our lives behind.
  In our own memories our graves we find.
And when we lean upon our hearts, they break.

I seem to see 'mid yonder glimmering spheres
  Another world:—not that our prayers record,
Wherein our God shall wipe away all tears,
  And never voice of mourning shall be heard;
But one between the sunset and moonrise:
  Near night, yet neighboring day: a twilit land,
  And peopled by a melancholy band—
The souls that loved and failed—with hopeless eyes;

More like that Hades of the antique creeds;—
  A land of vales forlorn, where Thought shall roam
Regretful, void of wholesome human deeds,
  An endless, homeless, pining after home,
To which all sights and sounds shall minister
  In vain:—white roses glimmering all alone
  In an evening light: and, with his haunting tone,
The advancing twilight's shard-born trumpeter.

A world like this world's worst come back again;
  Still groaning 'neath the burden of a fall:
Eternal longing with eternal pain,
  Want without hope, and memory saddening all.
All congregated failure and despair
  Shall wander there, through some old maze of wrong:—
  Ophelia drowning in her own death-song,
And first-love strangled in his golden hair.

Ah, well, for those that overcome, no doubt
  The crowns are ready; strength is to the strong.
But we—but we—weak hearts that grope about
  In darkness, with a lamp that fails along
The lengthening midnight, dying ere we reach
  The bridal doors! Oh, what for us remains,
  But mortal effort with immortal pains?
And yet—God breathed a spirit into each!
I know this miracle of the soul is more
  Than all the marvels that it looks upon.
And we are kings whose heritage was before
  The spheres, and owes no homage to the sun.
In my own breast a mightier world I bear
  Than all those orbs on orbs about me rolled;
  Nor are you kinglier, stars, though throned on gold,
And given the empires of the midnight-air.

For I, too, am undying as you are.
  Oh, teach me calm, and teach me self-control:—
To sphere my spirit like yon fixèd star
  That moves not ever in the utmost pole,
But whirls, and sleeps, and turns all heaven one way.
  So, strong as Atlas, should the spirit stand,
  And turn the great globe round in her right hand,
For recreation of her sovereign sway.

Ah yet!—For all, I shall not use my power,
  Nor reign within the light of my own home,
Till speculation fades, and that strange hour
  Of the departing of the soul is come;
Till all this wrinkled husk of care falls by,
  And my immortal nature stands upright
  In her perpetual morning, and the light
Of suns that set not on Eternity!

THE MAGIC LAND.

By woodland belt, by ocean-bar,
  The full south breeze our foreheads fanned,
And, under many a yellow star,
  We dropped into the Magic Land.

There, every sound and every sight
  Means more than sight or sound elsewhere;
Each twilight star a twofold light;
  Each rose a double redness, there.

By ocean-bar, by woodland belt,
  Our silent course a syren led,
Till dark in dawn began to melt,
  Through the wild wizard-work o'erhead.

A murmur from the violet vales!
  A glory in the goblin dell!
There beauty all her breast unveils,
  And music pours out all her shell.

We watched, toward the land of dreams,
  The fair moon draw the murmuring main;
A single thread of silver beams
  Was made the monster's rippling chain.

We heard far off the syren's song;
  We caught the gleam of sea-maid's hair.
The glimmering isles and rocks among,
  We moved through sparkling purple air.

Then morning rose, and smote from far
  Her elfin harps o'er land and sea;
And woodland belt, and ocean-bar,
  To one sweet note, sighed "Italy."

Digitized by Google

A LOVE-LETTER.

My love—my chosen—but not mine! I send
My whole heart to thee in these words I write;
So let the blotted lines, my soul's sole friend,
Lie upon thine, and there be blest at night.

This flower, whose bruised purple blood will stain
The page now wet with the hot tears that fall—
(Indeed, indeed, I struggle to restrain
This weakness, but the tears come, spite of all!)

I plucked it from the branch you used to praise,
The branch that hides the wall. I tend your flowers.
I keep the paths we paced in happier days.
How long ago they seem, those pleasant hours!

The white laburnum 's out. Your judas-tree
Begins to shed those crimson buds of his.
The nightingales sing—ah, too joyously!
Who says those birds are sad? I think there is

That in the books we read, which deeper wrings
My heart, so they lie dusty on the shelf.
Ah me! I meant to speak of other things,
Less sad. In vain! they bring me to myself.

I know your patience. And I would not cast
New shade on days so dark as yours are grown
By weak and wild repining for the past,
Since it is past forever, O mine own!

For hard enough the daily cross you bear,
Without that deeper pain reflection brings;
And all too sore the fretful household care,
Free of the contrast of remembered things.

But ah! it little profits, that we thrust
From all that 's said, what both must feel, unnamed.
Better to face it boldly, as we must,
Than feel it in the silence, and be shamed.

Irene, I have loved you, as men love
Light, music, odor, beauty, love itself;—
Whatever is apart from and above
Those daily needs which deal with dust and pelf.

And I had been content, without one thought
Our guardian angels could have blushed to know,
So to have lived and died, demanding naught
Save, living dying, to have loved you so.

My youth was orphaned, and my age will be
Childless. I have no sister. None, to steal
One stray thought from the many thoughts of thee,
Which are the source of all I think and feel.

My wildest wish was vassal to thy will:
My haughtiest hope, a pensioner on thy smile,
Which did with light my barren being fill,
As moonlight glorifies some desert isle.

I never thought to know what I have known—
The rapture, dear, of being loved by you:
I never thought, within my heart, to own
One wish so blest that you should share it too:

Nor ever did I deem, contemplating
The many sorrows in this place of pain,
So strange a sorrow to my life could cling,
As, being thus loved, to be beloved in vain.

But now we know the best, the worst. We have
Interred, and prematurely, and unknown,
Our youth, our hearts, our hopes, in one small grave,
Whence we must wander, widowed, to our own.

And if we comfort not each other, what
Shall comfort us, in the dark days to come?
Not the light laughter of the world, and not
The faces and the firelight of fond home.

And so I write to you; and write, and write,
For the mere sake of writing to you, dear.
What can I tell you, that you know not? Night
Is deepening through the rosy atmosphere

About the lonely casement of this room,
Which you have left familiar with the grace
That grows where you have been. And on the gloom
I almost fancy I can see your face:

Not pale with pain, and tears restrained for me,
As when I last beheld it; but as first,
A dream of rapture and of poesy,
Upon my youth, like dawn on dark, it burst.

Perchance I shall not ever see again
That face. I know that I shall never see
Its radiant beauty, as I saw it then,
Save by this lonely lamp of memory,

With childhood's starry graces lingering yet
I' the rosy orient of young womanhood;
And eyes like woodland violets newly wet;
And lips that left their meaning in my blood!

I will not say to you what I might say
To one less worthily loved, less worthy love.
I will not say... "Forget the past. Be gay.
And let the all ill-judging world approve

Light in your eyes, and laughter on your lip."
I will not say... "Dissolve in thought forever
Our sorrowful, but sacred, fellowship."
For that would be, to bid you, dear, dissever

Your nature from its nobler heritage
In consolations registered in heaven,

Digitized by Google

For griefs this world is barren to assuage,
And hopes to which, on earth, no home is given.

But I would whisper, what for evermore
My own heart whispers through the wakeful night, . . .
"This grief is but a shadow, flung before,
From some refulgent substance out of sight."

Wherefore it happens, in this riddling world,
That, where sin came not, sorrow yet should be;
Why heaven's most hurtful thunders should be hurled
At what seems noblest in humanity;

And we are punished for our purest deeds,
And chastened for our holiest thoughts; . . . alas!
There is no reason found in all the creeds,
Why these things are, nor whence they come to pass.

But in the heart of man, a secret voice
There is, which speaks, and will not be restrained,
Which cries to grief . . . "Weep on, while I rejoice,
Knowing that, somewhere, all will be explained."

I will not cant that commonplace of friends,
Which never yet hath dried one mourner's tears,
Nor say that grief's slow wisdom makes amends
For broken hearts and desolated years.

For who would barter all he hopes from life,
To be a little wiser than his kind?
Who arm his nature for continued strife,
Where all he seeks for hath been left behind?

But I would say, O pure and perfect pearl
Which I have dived so deep in life to find,
Locked in my heart thou liest. The wave may curl,
The wind may wail above us. Wave and wind,

What are their storm and strife to me and you?
No strife can mar the pure heart's inmost calm.
This life of ours, what is it? A very few
Soon-ended years, and then—the ceaseless psalm,

And the eternal sabbath of the soul!
Hush! . . . while I write, from the dim Carminé
The midnight angelus begins to roll,
And float athwart the darkness up to me.

My messenger (a man by danger tried)
Waits in the courts below; and ere our star
Upon the forehead of the dawn hath died,
Belovèd one, this letter will be far
Athwart the mountain, and the mist, to you.
I know each robber hamlet. I know all
This mountain people. I have friends both true
And trusted, sworn to aid whate'er befall.

I have a bark upon the gulf. And I,
If to my heart I yielded in this hour,
Might say . . . "Sweet fellow-sufferer, let us fly!
I know a little isle which doth embower

A home where exiled angels might forbear
A while to mourn for paradise." . . . But no!
Never, whate'er fate now may bring us, dear,
Shalt thou reproach me for that only woe

Which even love is powerless to console;
Which dwells where duty dies: and haunts the tomb
Of life's abandoned purpose in the soul;
And leaves to hope, in heaven itself, no room.

Man cannot make, but may ennoble, fate,
By nobly bearing it. So let us trust
Not to ourselves but God, and calmly wait
Love's orient, out of darkness and of dust.

Farewell, and yet again farewell, and yet
Never farewell—if farewell mean to fare
Alone and disunited. Love hath set
Our days, in music, to the self-same air;

And I shall feel, wherever we may be,
Even though in absence and an alien clime,
The shadow of the sunniness of thee,
Hovering, in patience, through a clouded time.

Farewell! The dawn is rising, and the light
Is making, in the east, a faint endeavor
To illuminate the mountain-peaks. Good-night.
Thine own, and only thine, my love, forever.

COUNT RINALDO RINALDI.

'Tis a dark-purple, moonlighted midnight:
There is music about on the air.
And where, through the water, fall flashing
The oars of each gay gondolier,
The lamp-lighted ripples are dashing,
In the musical moonlighted air,
To the music, in merriment; washing,
And splashing, the black marble stair
That leads to the last garden-terrace,
Where many a gay cavalier
And many a lady yet loiter,
Round the Palace in festival there.

'Tis a terrace all paven mosaic,
Black marble, and green malachite;
Round an ancient Venetian Palace,
Where the windows with lampions are bright.
'T is an evening of gala and festival.
Music, and passion, and light.
There is love in the nightingales' throats,
That sing in the garden so well:
There is love in the face of the moon:

Digitized by Google

There is love in the warm languid glances
Of the dancers adown the dim dances:
There is love in the low languid notes
That rise into rapture, and swell,
From viol, and flute, and bassoon.

The tree that bends down o'er the water,
So black, is a black-cypress tree.
And the statue, there, under the terrace,
Mnemosyne's statue must be.
There comes a black gondola slowly
To the Palace in festival there:
And the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Has mounted the black marble stair.

There was nothing but darkness, and midnight,
And tempest, and storm, in the breast
Of the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi,
As his foot o'er the black marble pressed—
The glimmering black marble stair
Where the weed in the green ooze is clinging,
That leads to the garden so fair,
Where the nightingales softly are singing,
Where the minstrels new music are stringing,
And the dancers for dancing prepare.

There rustles a robe of white satin:
There 's a footstep falls light by the stair:
There rustles a robe of white satin:
There 's a gleaming of soft golden hair:
And the Lady Irene Ricasoli
Stands near the cypress-tree there—
Near Mnemosyne's statue so fair,
The Lady Irene Ricasoli,
With the light in her long golden hair.

And the nightingales softly are singing
In the mellow and moonlighted air;
And the minstrels their viols are stringing;
And the dancers for dancing prepare.

"Siora," the Count said unto her,
"The shafts of ill-fortune pursue me;
The old grief grows newer and newer,
The old pangs are never at rest;
And the foes that have sworn to undo me
Have left me no peace in my breast.
They have slandered, and wronged, and maligned me:
Though they broke not my sword in my hand,
They have broken my heart in my bosom
And sorrow my youth has unmanned.
But I love you, Irene, Irene,
With such love as the wretched alone
Can feel from the desert within them
Which only the wretched have known!
And the heart of Rinaldo Rinaldi
Dreads, Lady, no frown but your own.
To others be all that you are, love—
A lady more lovely than most;
To me—be a fountain, a star, love,
That lights to his haven the lost;
A shrine that with tender devotion
The mariner, kneeling, doth deck
With the dank weeds yet dripping from ocean,
And the last jewel saved from the wreck.

"None heeds us, belovèd Irene!
None will mark if we linger or fly.
Amid all the mad masks in yon revel,
There is not an ear or an eye—
Not one—that will gaze or will listen;
And save the small star in the sky
Which, to light us, so softly doth glisten,
There is none will pursue us, Irene.
O love me, O save me, I die!
I am thine, O be mine, O belovèd!

"Fly with me, Irene, Irene!
The moon drops: the morning is near,
My gondola waits by the garden,
And fleet is my own gondolier!"
What the Lady Irene Ricasoli,
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone,
Where she leaned, 'neath the black-cypress tree,
To the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Replied then, it never was known,
And known, now, it never will be.

But the moon hath been melted in morning:
And the lamps in the windows are dead:
And the gay cavaliers from the terrace,
And the ladies they laughed with, are fled;
And the music is hushed in the viols;
And the minstrels, and dancers, are gone;
And the nightingales now in the garden,
From singing have ceased, one by one;
But the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Still stands, where he last stood, alone,
'Neath the black-cypress tree, near the water,
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone.

O'er his spirit was silence and midnight,
In his breast was the calm of despair.
He took, with a smile, from a casket
A single soft curl of gold hair,
A wavy warm curl of gold hair,
And into the black-bosomed water
He flung it athwart the black stair.
The skies they were changing above him;
The dawn, it came cold on the air;
He drew from his bosom a kerchief—
"Would," he sighed, "that her face was less fair!
That her face was less hopelessly fair."
And folding the kerchief, he covered
The eyes of Mnemosyne there.

PROGRESS.

When Liberty lives loud on every lip,
But Freedom moans,
Trampled by Nations whose faint footfalls slip
Round bloody thrones;
When, here and there, in dungeon and in thrall,
Or exile pale,
Like torches dying at a funeral,
Brave natures fail;
When Truth, the armed archangel, stretches wide
God's tromp in vain,
And the world, drowsing, turns upon its side
To drowse again;
O Man, whose course hath called itself sublime
Since it began,
What art thou in such dying age of time,
As man to man?

Digitized by Google

When Love's last wrong hath been forgotten coldly,
As First Love's face;
And, like a rat that comes to wanton boldly
In some lone place,
Once festal—in the realm of light and laughter
Grim Doubt appears;
While weird Suggestions from Death's vague Hereafter,
O'er ruined years,
Creep, dark and darker, with new dread to mutter
Through Life's long shade,
Yet make no more in the chill breast the flutter
Which once they made;
Whether it be—that all doth at the grave
Round to its term,
That nothing lives in that last darkness, save
The little worm,
Or whether the tired spirit prolong its course
Through realms unseen—
Secure, that unknown world cannot be worse
Than this hath been;
Then when through Thought's gold chain, so frail and slender,
No link will meet;
When all the broken harps of Language render
No sound that 's sweet;
When, like torn books, sad days weigh down each other
I' the dusty shelf;
O Man, what art thou, O my friend, my brother,
Even to thyself?

THE PORTRAIT.

Midnight past! Not a sound of aught
Through the silent house, but the wind at his prayers.
I sat by the dying fire, and thought
Of the dear dead woman up-stairs.

A night of tears! for the gusty rain
Had ceased, but the eaves were dripping yet;
And the moon looked forth, as though in pain,
With her face all white and wet:

Nobody with me, my watch to keep,
But the friend of my bosom, the man I love:
And grief had sent him fast to sleep
In the chamber up above.

Nobody else, in the country-place
All round, that knew of my loss beside,
But the good young Priest with the Raphael-face,
Who confessed her when she died.

That good young Priest is of gentle nerve,
And my grief had moved him beyond control;
For his lip grew white, as I could observe,
When he speeded her parting soul.

I sat by the dreary hearth alone;
I thought of the pleasant days of yore:
I said: "the staff of my life is gone:
The woman I loved is no more.

"On her cold, dead bosom my portrait lies,
Which next to her heart she used to wear—
Haunting it o'er with her tender eyes,
When my own face was not there.

"It is set all round with rubies red,
And pearls which a Peri might have kept.
For each ruby there, my heart hath bled:
For each pearl, my eyes have wept."

And I said: "The thing is precious to me:
They will bury her soon in the churchyard clay;
It lies on her heart, and lost must be,
If I do not take it away."

I lighted my lamp at the dying flame,
And crept up the stairs that creaked for fright,
Till into the chamber of death I came,
Where she lay all in white.

The moon shone over her winding-sheet.
There, stark she lay on her carven bed:
Seven burning tapers about her feet,
And seven about her head.

As I stretched my hand, I held my breath;
I turned as I drew the curtains apart:
I dared not look on the face of death:
I knew where to find her heart—

I thought, at first, as my touch fell there,
It had warmed that heart to life, with love;
For the thing I touched was warm, I swear,
And I could feel it move.

'Twas the hand of a man, that was moving slow
O'er the heart of the dead—from the other side:
And at once the sweat broke over my brow,
"Who is robbing the corpse?" I cried.

Opposite me, by the tapers' light,
The friend of my bosom, the man I loved,
Stood over the corpse, and all as white,
And neither of us moved.

"What do you here, my friend?" ... The man
Looked first at me, and then at the dead.
"There is a portrait here," he began;
"There is. It is mine," I said.

Said the friend of my bosom, "Yours, no doubt,
The portrait was, till a month ago,
When this suffering angel took that out,
And placed mine there, I know."

"This woman, she loved me well," said I.
"A month ago," said my friend to me:
"And in your throat," I groaned, "you lie!"
He answered ... "Let us see."

"Enough!" I returned, "let the dead decide:
And whosesoever the portrait prove,
His shall it be, when the cause is tried,
Where Death is arraigned by Love."

We found the portrait there, in its place:
We opened it by the tapers' shine:
The gems were all unchanged: the face
Was—neither his nor mine.

Digitized by Google

"One nail drives out another, at least!
The face of the portrait there," I cried,
"Is our friend's, the Raphael-faced young priest,
Who confessed her when she died."

The setting is all of rubies red,
And pearls which a Peri might have kept.
For each ruby there my heart hath bled:
For each pearl my eyes have wept.

ASTARTE.

When the latest strife is lost, and all is done with,
Ere we slumber in the spirit and the brain,
We drowse back, in dreams, to days that life begun with,
And their tender light returns to us again.

I have cast away the tangle and the torment
Of the cords that bound my life up in a mesh;
And the pulse begins to throb that long lay dormant
'Neath their pressure; and the old wounds bleed afresh.

I am touched again with shades of early sadness,
Like the summer-cloud's light shadow in my hair;
I am thrilled again with breaths of boyish gladness,
Like the scent of some last primrose on the air.

And again she comes, with all her silent graces,
The lost woman of my youth, yet unpossessed;
And her cold face so unlike the other faces
Of the women whose dead lips I since have pressed.

The motion and the fragrance of her garments
Seem about me, all the day long, in the room:
And her face, with its bewildering old endearments
Comes at night, between the curtains, in the gloom.

When vain dreams are stirred with sighing, near the morning,
To my own her phantom lips I feel approach;
And her smile at eve breaks o'er me without warning
From its speechless, pale, perpetual reproach.

When life's dawning glimmer yet had all the tint there
Of the orient, in the freshness of the grass,
(Ah what feet since then have trodden out the print there!)
Did her soft, her silent footsteps fall and pass.

They fell lightly, as the dew falls 'mid ungathered
Meadow-flowers; and lightly lingered with the dew.
But the dew is gone, the grass is dried and withered,
And the traces of those steps have faded too.

Other footsteps fall about me—faint, uncertain,
In the shadow of the world, as it recedes:
Other forms peer through the half-uplifted curtain
Of that mystery which hangs behind the creeds.

What is gone, is gone forever. And new fashions
May replace old forms which nothing can restore:
But I turn from sighing back departed passions
With that pining at the bosom as of yore.

I remember to have murmured, morn and even:
"Though the earth dispart these Earthlies, face from face,
Yet the Heavenlies shall surely join in Heaven,
For the spirit hath no bonds in time or space.

"Where it listeth, there it bloweth; all existence
Is its region; and it houseth, where it will.
I shall feel her through immeasurable distance,
And grow nearer and be gathered to her still.

"If I fail to find her out by her gold tresses,
Brows, and breast, and lips, and language of sweet strains,
I shall know her by traces of dead kisses,
And that portion of myself which she retains."

But my being is confused with new experience,
And changed to something other than it was;
And the Future with the Past is set at variance;
And life falters with the burdens which it has.

Earth's old sins press fast behind me, weakly wailing:
Faint before me fleets the good I have not done;
And my search for her may still be unavailing
'Mid the spirits that are passed beyond the sun.

AT HOME DURING THE BALL.

'Tis hard upon the dawn, and yet
She comes not from the ball.
The night is cold, and bleak, and wet,
And the snow lies over all.

I praised her with her diamonds on:
And as she went, she smiled.
And yet I sighed when she was gone,
Above our sleeping child.

And all night long, as soft and slow
As falls the falling rain,
The thoughts of days gone long ago
Have filled my heart again.

Once more I hear the Rhine rush down
(I hear it in my mind!)
Once more about the sleeping town,
The lamps wink in the wind.

Digitized by Google

The narrow, silent street I pass;
  The house stands o'er the river;
A light is at the casement-glass,
  That leads my soul forever.

I feel my way along the gloom,
  Stair after stair, I push the door;
I find no change within the room,
  And all things as of yore.

One little room was all we had
  For June and for December.
The world is wide, but oh how sad
  It seems, when I remember!

The cage with the canary-bird
  Hangs in the window still;
The small red rose-tree is not stirred
  Upon the window-sill;

Wide open her piano stands;
  —That song I made to ease
A passing pain while her soft hands
  Went faintly o'er the keys!

The fire within the stove burns down;
  The light is dying fast.
How dear is all it shines upon,
  That firelight of the Past!

No sound! the drowsy Dutch-clock ticks.
  Oh, how should I forget
The slender ebon crucifix,
  That by her bed is set?

Her little bed is white as snow—
  How dear that little bed!
Sweet dreams about the curtains go,
  And whisper round her head.

That gentle head sleeps o'er her arm
  —Sleeps all its soft brown hair:
And those dear clothes of hers, yet warm,
  Droop open on the chair.

Yet warm the snowy petticoat!
  The dainty corset too!
How warm the ribbon from her throat,
  And warm each little shoe!

Lie soft, dear arm upon the pillow!
  Sleep, foolish little head!
Ah, well she sleeps! I know the willow
  That curtains her cold bed.

Since last I trod that silent street
  'Tis many a year ago:
And, if I there could set my feet
  Once more, I do not know

If I should find it where it was,
  That house upon the river:
But the light that lit the casement-glass
  I know is dark forever.

Hark! wheels below, . . . my lady's knock!
  —Farewell, the old romance!—
"Well, dear, you 're late—past four o'clock!—
  How often did you dance?"

Not cooler from the crowning waltz,
  She takes my half the pillow.
Well—well!—the women free from faults
  Have beds below the willow!

AT HOME AFTER THE BALL.

The clocks are calling Three
  Across the silent floors.
The fire in the Library
  Dies out; through the open doors
The red empty room you may see.

In the Nursery, up-stairs,
  The child had gone to sleep,
Half-way 'twixt dreams and prayers,
  When the hall-door made him leap
To its thunder unawares.

Like love in a worldly breast,
  Alone in my lady's chamber,
The lamp burns low, suppressed
  Mid satins of broidered amber,
Where she stands, half undressed:

Her bosom all unlaced;
  Her cheeks with a bright-red spot;
Her long dark hair displaced,
  Down streaming, heeded not,
From her white throat to her waist:

She stands up her full height,
  With her ball-dress slipping down her,
And her eyes as fixed and bright
  As the diamond stars that crown her—
An awful, beautiful sight.

Beautiful, yes . . . with her hair
  So wild, and her cheeks so flushed!
Awful, yes . . . for there
  In her beauty, she stands hushed
By the pomp of her own despair!

And fixed there, without doubt,
  Face to face with her own sorrow,
She will stand, till, from without,
  The light of the neighboring morrow
Creeps in and finds her out.

With last night's music pealing
  Youth's dirges in her ears:
With last night's lamps revealing,
  In the charnels of old years,
The face of each dead feeling.

Ay, Madam, here alone
  You may think, till your heart is broken,
Of the love that is dead and done,
  Of the days that, with no token,
For evermore are gone.—

Weep if you can, beseech you!
  There 's no one by to curb you;
Your child's cry cannot reach you;
  Your lord will not disturb you:
Weep! . . . what can weeping teach you?

Digitized by Google

Your tears are dead in you.
"What harm, where all things change,"
You say, "if we change too?
—The old still sunny Grange!
Ah, that's far off i' the dew.

"Were those not pleasant hours,
Ere I was what I am?
My garden of fresh flowers!
My milk-white weanling lamb!
My bright laburnum-bowers!

"The orchard-wall so trim!
The redbreast in the thorn!
The twilight soft and dim!
The child's heart! eve and morn,
So rich with thoughts of *him!*"

Hush! your weanling lamb is dead:
Your garden trodden over.
They have broken the farm-shed:
They have buried your first lover
With the grass above his head.

Has the Past, then, so much power,
You dare take not from the shelf
That book with the dry flower,
Lest it make you hang yourself
For being yourself for an hour?

Why can't you let thought be
For even a little while?
There's naught in memory
Can bring you back the smile
Those lips have lost. Just see,

Here what a costly gem
To-night in your hair you wore—
Pearls on a diamond stem!
When sweet things are no more,
Better not think of them.

Are you saved by pangs that pained you:
Is there comfort in all it cost you,
Before the world had gained you,
Before that God had lost you,
Or your soul had quite disdained you?

For your soul (and this is worst
To bear, as you well know)
Has been watching you, from first,
As sadly as God could do;
And yourself yourself have cursed.

Talk of the flames of Hell!
We fuel ourselves, I conceive,
The fire the Fiend lights. Well,
Believe or disbelieve,
We know more than we tell!

Surely you need repose!
To-morrow again—the Ball.
And you must revive the rose
In your cheek to bloom for all.
Not go? . . . why the whole world goes!

To bed! to bed! 'Tis sad
To find that Fancy's wings
Have lost the hues they had.
In thinking of these things
Some women have gone mad.

MIDGES.

She is talking æsthetics, the dear clever creature!
Upon Man and his functions, she speaks with a smile.
Her ideas are divine upon Art, upon Nature,
The Sublime, the Heroic, and Mr. Carlyle.

I no more am found worthy to join in the talk, now;
So I follow with my surreptitious cigar;
While she leads our poetical friend up the walk, now,
Who quotes Wordsworth and praises her "*Thoughts on a star.*"

Meanwhile, there is dancing in yonder green bower,
A swarm of young midges. They dance high and low.
'Tis a sweet little species that lives but one hour,
And the eldest was born half an hour ago.

One impulsive young midge I hear ardently pouring
In the ears of a shy little wanton in gauze,
His eternal devotion; his ceaseless adoring;
Which shall last till the Universe breaks from its laws:

His passion is not, he declares, the mere fever
Of a rapturous moment. It knows no control:
It will burn in his breast through existence forever,
Immutably fixed in the deeps of the soul!

She wavers: she flutters: . . . male midges are fickle:
Dare she trust him her future? . . . she asks with a sigh:
He implores, . . . and a tear is beginning to trickle:
She is weak: they embrace, and . . . the lovers pass by.

While they pass me, down here on a rose-leaf has lighted
A pale midge, his feelers all drooping and torn:
His existence is withered; its future is blighted:
His hopes are betrayed: and his breast is forlorn.

By the midge his heart trusted his heart is deceived now:
In the virtue of midges no more he believes:
From love in its falsehood, once wildly believed, now
He will bury his desolate life in the leaves.

His friends would console him . . . the noblest and sagest
Of midges have held that a midge lives again;
In Eternity, say they, the strife, thou now wagest
With sorrow, shall cease . . . but their words are in vain!

Digitized by Google

Can Eternity bring back the seconds now wasted
In hopeless desire? or restore to his breast
The belief he has lost, with the bliss he once tasted,
Embracing the midge that his being loved best?

His friends would console him . . . life yet is before him;
Many hundred long seconds he still has to live:
In the state yet a mighty career spreads before him:
Let him seek in the great world of action to strive!

There is Fame! there's Ambition! and, grander than either,
There is Freedom! . . . the progress and march of the race! . . .
But to Freedom his breast beats no longer, and neither
Ambition nor action her loss can replace.

If the time had been spent in acquiring æsthetics
I have squandered in learning this language of midges,
There might, for my friend in her peripatetics,
Have been now *two* asses to help o'er the bridges.

As it is, . . . I'll report her the whole conversation.
It would have been longer; but, somehow or other,
(In the midst of that misanthrope's long lamentation),
A midge in my right eye became a young mother.

Since my friend if so clever, I'll ask her to tell me
Why the least living thing (a mere midge in the egg!)
Can make a man's tears flow, as now it befell me . . .
O you dear clever woman, explain it, I beg!

A QUIET MOMENT.

Stay with me, Lady, while you may!
For life's so sad—this hour's so sweet;
Ah, Lady—life too long will stay;
Too soon this hour will fleet.

How fair this mountain's purple bust,
Alone in high and glimmering air!
And see, . . . those village spires, upthrust
From yon dark plain—how fair!

How sweet yon lone and lovely scene,
And yonder dropping fiery ball,
And eve's sweet spirit, that steals, unseen,
With darkness over all!

This blessèd hour is yours, and eve's;
And this is why it seems so sweet,
To lie, as hushed as fallen leaves
In autumn, at your feet:

And watch, awhile released from care,
The twilight in yon quiet skies,
The twilight in your quiet hair,
The twilight in your eyes:

Till in my soul the twilight stays,
—Eve's twilight, since the dawn's is o'er!
And life's too well-known worthless days
Become unknown once more.

Your face is no uncommon face;
Like it, I have seen many a one,
And may again, before my race
Of care be wholly run.

But not the less, those earnest brows,
And that pure oval cheek can charm;
Those eyes of tender deep repose:
That breast, the heart keeps warm.

Because a sense of goodness sleeps
In every sober, soft brown tress,
That o'er those brows, uncared for, keeps
Its shadowy quietness:

Because that lip's soft silence shows,
Though passion it hath never known,
That well, to kiss one kiss, it knows—
—A woman's holiest one!

Yours is the charm of calm good sense,
Of wholesome views of earth and heaven,
Of pity, touched with reverence,
To all things freely given.

Your face no sleepless midnight fills,
For all its serious sweet endeavor;
It plants no pang, no rapture thrills,
But ah!—it pleases ever!

Not yours is Cleopatra's eye,
And Juliet's tears you never knew:
Never will amorous Antony
Kiss kingdoms out for you!

Never for you will Romeo's love,
From deeps of moonlit musing, break
To poetry about the glove
Whose touch may press your cheek.

But ah, in one—no Antony
Nor Romeo now, nor like to these—
(Whom neither Cleopatra's eye,
Nor Juliet's tears, could please).

How well they lull the lurking care
Which else within the mind endures—
That soft white hand, that soft dark hair,
And that soft voice of yours!

So, while you stand, a fragile form,
With that close shawl around you drawn,
And eve's last ardors fading warm
Adown the mountain-lawn,

'T is sweet, although we part to-morrow,
And ne'er, the same, shall meet again,
Awhile, from old habitual sorrow
To cease; to cease from pain;

Digitized by Google

To feel that, ages past, the soul
  Hath lived—and ages hence will live;
And taste, in hours like this, the whole
  Of all the years can give.

Then, Lady, yet one moment stay,
  While your sweet face makes all things sweet,
For ah, the charm will pass away
  Before again we meet!

ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR.

The night 's in November: the winds are at strife:
  The snow 's on the hill, and the ice on the mere:
The world to its winter is turned: and my life
  To its twenty-fourth year.

The swallows are flown to the south long ago:
  The roses are fallen: the woodland is sere.
Hope's flown with the swallows: Love's rose will not grow
  In my twenty-fourth year.

The snow on the threshold: the cold at the heart:
  But the fagot to warm, and the wine-cup to cheer:
God's help to look up to: and courage to start
  On my twenty-fourth year.

And 't is well that the month of the roses is o'er!
  The last, which I plucked for Nerœa to wear,
She gave her new lover. A man should do more
  With his twenty-fourth year

Than mourn for a woman, because she 's unkind,
  Or pine for a woman, because she is fair.
Ah, I loved you, Nerœa! But now... never mind,
  'Tis my twenty-fourth year!

What a thing! to have done with the follies of Youth,
  Ere Age brings its follies!... though many a tear
It should cost, to see Love fly away, and find Truth
  In one's twenty-fourth year.

The Past's golden valleys are drained. I must plant
  On the Future's rough upland new harvests, I fear.
Ho, the plough and the team!... who would perish of want
  In his twenty-fourth year?

Man's heart is a well, which forever renews
  The void at the bottom, no sounding comes near:
And Love does not die, though its object I lose
  In my twenty-fourth year.

The great and the little are only in name,
  The smoke from my chimney casts shadows as drear
On the heart, as the smoke from Vesuvius in flame:
  And my twenty-fourth year,

From the joys that have cheered it, the cares that have troubled,
  What is wise to pursue, what is well to revere,
May judge all as fully as tho' life were doubled
  To its forty-eighth year.

If the prospect grow dim, 't is because it grows wide.
  Every loss hath its gain. So, from sphere on to sphere,
Man mounts up the ladder of Time; so I stride
  Up my twenty-fourth year!

Exulting?... no... sorrowing?... no... with a mind
  Whose regret chastens hope, whose faith triumphs o'er fear:
Not repining: not confident: no, but resigned
  To my twenty-fourth year.

SMALL PEOPLE.

The warm moon was up in the sky,
  And the warm summer out on the land.
There trembled a tear from her eye:
  There trembled a tear on my hand.

Her sweet face I could not see clear,
  For the shade was so dark in the tree:
I only felt touched by a tear,
  And I thought that the tear was for me.

In her small ear I whispered a word,—
  With her sweet lips she laughed in my face:
And, as light through the leaves as a bird,
  She flitted away from the place.

Then she told to her sister, the snake,
  All I said; and her cousin the Toad.
The Snake slipped away to the brake,
  The Toad went to town by the road.

The Toad told the Devil's Coach-horse,
  Who cocked up his tail at the news.
The Snake hissed the secret, of course,
  To the Newt, who was changing her shoes.

The Newt drove away to the ball,
  And told it the Scorpion and Asp.
The Spider who lives in the wall
  Overheard it, and told it the Wasp.

The Wasp told the Midge and the Gnat:
  And the Gnat told the Flea and the Nit.
The Nit dropped an egg as she sat:
  The Flea shrugged his shoulders, and bit.

The Nit and the Flea are too small,
  And the Snake slips from under my foot:
I wish I could find 'mid them all
  A man—to insult and to shoot!

FAILURE.

I have seen those that wore Heaven's armor worsted:
  I have heard Truth lie:
Seen Life, beside the founts for which it thirsted,
  Curse God and die:

Digitized by Google

I have felt the hand, whose touch was rapture, braiding
Among my hair
Love's choicest flow'rets, and have found how fading
Those garlands were:

I have watched my first and holiest hopes depart,
One after one:
I have held the hand of Death upon my heart,
And made no moan:

I have seen her whom life's whole sacrifice
Was made to keep,
Pass coldly by me with a stranger's eyes,
Yet did not weep:

Now even my body fails me; and my brow
Aches night and day:
I am weak with overwork: how can I now
Go forth and play?

What! now that Youth's forgotten aspirations
Are all no more,
Rest there, indeed, all Youth's glad recreations,
—An untried store?

Alas! what skills this heart of sad experience,
This frame o'erwrought,
This memory with life's motion all at variance,
This aching thought?

How shall I come, with these, to follow pleasure
Where others find it?
Will not their sad steps mar the merriest measure,
Or lag behind it?

Still must the man move sadlier for the dreams
That mocked the boy;
And, having failed to achieve, must still, it seems,
Fail to enjoy.

It is no common failure, to have failed
Where man hath given
A whole life's effort to the task assailed—
Spent earth on heaven.

If error and if failure enter here,
What helps repentance?
Remember this, O Lord, in thy severe
Last sentence!

REQUIESCAT.

I SOUGHT to build a deathless monument
To my dead love. Therein I meant to place
All precious things, and rare: as Nature blent
All single sweetness in one sweet face.
I could not build it worthy her mute merit,
Nor worthy her white brows and holy eyes,
Nor worthy of her perfect and pure spirit,
Nor of my own immortal memories.
But, as some rapt artificer of old,
To enshrine the ashes of a virgin saint,
Might scheme to work with ivory, and fine gold,
And carven gems, and legended and quaint
Seraphic heraldries; searching far lands,
Orient and Occident, for all things rare,
To consecrate the toil of reverent hands,
And make his labor, like her virtue, fair;
Knowing no beauty beautiful as she,
And all his labor void, but to beguile
A sacred sorrow; so I worked. Ah, see
Here are the fragments of my shattered pile!
I keep them, and the flowers that sprang between
Their broken workmanship—the flowers and weeds!
Sleep soft among the violets, O my Queen—
Lie calm among my ruined thoughts and deeds.

GOOD-NIGHT IN THE PORCH.

A LITTLE longer in the light, love, let me be.
The air is warm.
I hear the cuckoo's last good-night float from the copse below the Farm.
A little longer, Sister sweet—your hand in mine
—on this old seat.

In yon red gable, which the rose creeps round and o'er, your casement shines
Against the yellow west, o'er those forlorn and solitary pines.
The long, long day is nearly done. How silent all the place is grown!

The stagnant levels, one and all, are burning in the distant marsh—
Hark! 't was the bittern's parting call. The frogs are out: with murmurs harsh
The low reeds vibrate. See! the sun catches the long pools one by one.

A moment, and those orange flats will turn dead gray or lurid white.
Look up! o'erhead the winnowing bats are come and gone, eluding sight.
The little worms are out. The snails begin to move down shining trails,

With slow pink cones, and soft wet horns. The garden-bowers are dim with dew.
With sparkling drops the white-rose thorns are twinkling, where the sun slips through
Those reefs of coral buds hung free below the purple Judas-tree.

From the warm upland comes a gust made fragrant with the brown hay there.
The meek cows, with their white horns thrust above the hedge, stand still and stare.
The steaming horses from the wains droop o'er the tank their plaited manes.

And o'er yon hill-side brown and barren (where you and I as children played,
Starting the rabbit to his warren), I hear the sandy, shrill-cascade
Leap down upon the vale, and spill his heart out round the muffled mill.

Digitized by Google

O can it be for nothing only that God has shown
his world to me?
Or but to leave the heart more lonely with loss
of beauty . . . can it be?
O closer, closer, Sister dear . . . nay, I have
kissed away that tear.

God bless you, Dear, for that kind thought
which only upon tears could rise!
God bless you for the love that sought to hide
them in those drooping eyes,
Whose lids I kiss! . . . poor lids, so red! but let
my kiss fall there instead.

Yes, sad indeed it seems, each night—and sadder,
Dear, for your sweet sake!
To watch the last low lingering light, and know
not where the morn may break.
To-night we sit together here. To-morrow night
will come . . . ah, where?

O child! howe'er assured be faith, to say farewell
is fraught with gloom,
When, like one flower, the germs of death and
genius ripen toward the tomb;
And earth each day, as some fond face at part-
ing, gains a graver grace.

There's not a flower, there's not a tree in this
old garden where we sit,
But that some fragrant memory is closed and
folded up in it.
To-night the dog-rose smells as wild, as fresh, as
when I was a child.

'T is eight years since (do you forget?) we set
those lilies near the wall:
You were a blue-eyed child: even yet I seem to
see the ringlets fall—
The golden ringlets, blown behind your shoulders
in the merry wind.

Ah, me! old times, they cling, they cling! And
oft by yonder green old gate
The field shows through, in morns of spring, an
eager boy, I paused elate
With all sweet fancies loosed from school. And
oft, you know, when eves were cool,

In summer-time, and through the trees young
gnats began to be about,
With some old book upon your knees 't was here
you watched the stars come out.
While oft, to please me, you sang through some
foolish song I made for you.

And there's my epic—I began when life seemed
long, though longer art—
And all the glorious deeds of man made golden
riot in my heart—
Eight books . . . it will not number nine! I die
before my heroine.

Sister! they say that drowning men in one wild
moment can recall
Their whole life long, and feel again the pain—
the bliss—that thronged it all:
Last night those phantoms of the Past again
came crowding round me fast.

Near morning, when the lamp was low, against
the wall they seemed to flit;
And, as the wavering light would glow or fall,
they came and went with it.
The ghost of boyhood seemed to gaze down the
dark verge of vanished days.

Once more the garden where she walked on sum-
mer eves to tend her flowers,
Once more the lawn where first we talked of
future years in twilight hours
Arose; once more she seemed to pass before me
in the waving grass

To that old terrace; her bright hair about her
warm neck all undone,
And waving on the balmy air, with tinges of the
dying sun.
Just one star kindling in the west: just one bird
singing near its nest.

So lovely, so beloved! oh, fair as though that
sun had never set
Which stayed upon her golden hair, in dreams I
seem to see her yet!
To see her in that old green place—the same
hushed, smiling, cruel face!

A little older, love, than you are now; and I was
then a boy;
And wild and wayward-hearted too; to her my
passion was a toy;
Soon broken! ah, a foolish thing—a butterfly
with crumpled wing!

Her hair, too, was like yours—as bright, but
with a warmer golden tinge:
Her eyes—a somewhat deeper light, and dreamed
below a longer fringe:
And still that strange grave smile she had stays
in my heart and keeps it sad!

There's no one knows it, truest friend, but you:
for I have never breathed
To other ears the frozen end of those spring-
garlands Hope once wreathed;
And death will come before again I breathe that
name untouched by pain.

From little things—a star, a flower—that
touched us with the self-same thought,
My passion deepened hour by hour, until to that
fierce heat 't was wrought,
Which, shrivelling over every nerve, crumbled
the outworks of reserve.

I told her then, in that wild time, the love I
knew she long had seen;
The accusing pain that burned like crime, yet
left me nobler than I had been;
What matter with what words I wooed her?
She said I had misunderstood her.

And something more—small matter what! of
friendship something—sister's love—
She said that I was young—knew not my own
heart—as the years would prove—
She wished me happy—she conceived an interest
in me—and believed

Digitized by Google

I should grow up to something great—and soon forget her—soon forget
This fancy—and congratulate my life she had released it, yet—
With more such words—a lie! a lie! She broke my heart, and flung it by!

A life's libation lifted up, from her proud lip she dashed untasted:
There trampled lay love's costly cup, and in the dust the wine was wasted.
She knew I could not pour such wine again at any other shrine.

Then I remember a numb mood: mad murmurings of the words she said:
A slow shame smouldering through my blood; that surged and sung within my head:
And drunken sunlights reeling through the leaves: above, the burnished blue

Hot on my eyes—a blazing shield: a noise among the waterfalls:
A free crow up the brown cornfield floating at will: faint shepherd-calls:
And reapers reaping in the shocks of gold: and girls with purple frocks:

All which the more confused my brain: and nothing could I realize
But the great fact of my own pain: I saw the fields: I heard the cries:
The crow's shade dwindled up the hill: the world went on: my heart stood still.

I thought I held in my hot hand my life crushed up: I could have tossed
The crumpled riddle from me, and laughed loud to think what I had lost.
A bitter strength was in my mind: like Samson, when she scorned him—blind,

And casting reckless arms about the props of life to hug them down—
A madman with his eyes put out. But all my anger was my own.
I spared the worm upon my walk: I left the white rose on its stalk.

All 's over long since. Was it strange that I was mad with grief and shame?
And I would cross the seas, and change my ancient home, my father's name?
In the wild hope, if that might be, to change my own identity!

I know that I was wrong: I know it was not well to be so wild.
But the scorn stung so!... Pity now could wound not!... I have seen her child:
It had the self-same eyes she had: their gazing almost made me mad.

Dark violet eyes whose glances, deep with April-hints of sunny tears,
'Neath long soft lashes laid asleep, seemed all too thoughtful for her years;
As though from mine her gaze had caught the secret of some mournful thought.

But, when she spoke her father's air broke o'er her... that clear confident voice!
Some happy souls there are, that wear their nature lightly; these rejoice
The world by living; and receive from all men more than what they give.

One handful of their buoyant chaff exceeds our hoards of careful grain:
Because their love breaks through their laugh, while ours is fraught with tender pain:
The world, that knows itself too sad, is proud to keep some faces glad:

And, so it is! from such a one Misfortune softly steps aside
To let him still walk in the sun. These things must be. I cannot chide,
Had I been she I might have made the self-same choice. She shunned the shade.

To some men God hath given laughter: but tears to some men He hath given:
He bade us sow in tears, hereafter to harvest holier smiles in Heaven:
And tears and smiles, they are his gift: both good, to smite or to uplift:

He knows his sheep: the wind and showers beat not too sharply the shorn lamb:
His wisdom is more wise than ours: He knew my nature—what I am:
He tempers smiles with tears: both good, to bear in time the Christian mood.

O yet—in scorn of mean relief, let Sorrow bear her heavenly fruit!
Better the wildest hour of grief than the low pastime of the brute!
Better to weep, for He wept too, than laugh as every fool can do!

For sure, 't were best to bear the cross; nor lightly fling the thorns behind;
Lest we grow happy by the loss of what was noblest in the mind.
—Here—in the ruins of my years—Father, I bless Thee through these tears!

It was in the far foreign lands this sickness came upon me first.
Below strange suns, 'mid alien hands this fever of the south was nursed,
Until it reached some vital part. I die not of a broken heart.

O think not that! If I could live... there 's much to live for—worthy life,
It is not for what fame could give—though that I scorn not—but the strife
Were noble for its own sake too. I thought that I had much to do—

But God is wisest! Hark, again!... 't was yon black bittern, as he rose
Against the wild light o'er the fen. How red your little casement glows!
The night falls fast. How lonely, Dear, this bleak old house will look next year!

Digitized by Google

So sad a thought? . . . ah, yes! I know it is not good to brood on this:
And yet—such thoughts will come and go, unbidden. 'Tis that you should miss,
My darling, one familiar tone of this weak voice when I am gone.

And, for what 's past—I will not say in what she did that all was right,
But all 's forgiven; and I pray for her heart's welfare, day and night.
All things are changed! This cheek would glow even near hers but faintly now!

Thou—God! before whose sleepless eye not even in vain the sparrows fall,
Receive, sustain me! Sanctify my soul. Thou know'st, Thou lovest all.
Too weak to walk alone—I see Thy hand: I falter back to Thee.

Saved from the curse of time which throws its baseness on us day by day:
Its wretched joys, and worthless woes; till all the heart is worn away.
I feel Thee near. I hold my breath, by the half-open doors of Death.

And sometimes, glimpses from within of glory (wondrous sight and sound!)
Float near me: faces pure from sin; strange music; saints with splendor crowned:
I seem to feel my native air blow down from some high region there,

And fan my spirit pure: I rise above the sense of loss and pain:
Faint forms that lured my childhood's eyes, long lost, I seemed to find again:
I see the end of all; I feel hope, awe, no language can reveal.

Forgive me, Lord, if overmuch I love that form Thou mad'st so fair;
I know that Thou didst make her such; and fair but as the flowers were—
Thy work: her beauty was but Thine; the human less than the divine.

My life hath been one search for Thee 'mid thorns found red with Thy dear blood:
In many a dark Gethsemane I seemed to stand where Thou hadst stood:
And, scorned in this world's Judgment-Place, at times, through tears, to catch Thy face.

Thou suffered'st here, and didst not fail: Thy bleeding feet these paths have trod:
But Thou wert strong, and I am frail: and I am man, and Thou wert God.
Be near me: keep me in Thy sight: or lay my soul asleep in light.

O to be where the meanest mind is more than Shakespeare! where one look
Shows more than here the wise can find, though toiling slow from book to book!
Where life is knowledge: love is sure: and hope's brief promise made secure.

O dying voice of human praise! the crude ambitions of my youth!
I long to pour immortal lays! great pæans of perennial Truth!
A larger work! a loftier aim! . . . and what are laurel-leaves, and fame?

And what are words? How little these the silence of the soul express!
Mere froth—the foam and flower of seas whose hungering waters heave and press
Against the planets and the sides of night—mute, yearning, mystic tides!

To ease the heart with song is sweet: sweet to be heard if heard by love.
And you have heard me. When we meet shall we not sing the old songs above
To grander music? Sweet, one kiss. O blessed it is to die like this!

To lapse from being without pain: your hand in mine, on mine your heart:
The unshaken faith to meet again that sheaths the pang with which we part:
My head upon your bosom, sweet: your hand in mine, on this old seat!

So; closer wind that tender arm . . . How the hot tears fall! Do not weep,
Beloved, but let your smile stay warm about me. "In the Lord they sleep."
You know the words the Scripture saith . . . O light, O Glory! . . . is this death?

THE PARTING OF LAUNCELOT AND GUENEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Now, as the time wore by to Our Lady's Day,
Spring lingered in the chambers of the South.
The nightingales were far in fairy-lands.
Beyond the sunset; but the wet blue woods
Were half aware of violets in the wake
Of morning rains. The swallow still delayed
To build and be about in noisy roofs,
And March was moaning in the windy elm.

But Arthur's royal purpose held to keep
A joust of arms to solemnize the time
In stately Camelot. So the King sent forth
His heralds, and let cry through all the land
That he himself would take the lists, and tilt
Against all comers.
Hither came the chiefs
Of Christendom. The King of Northgalies;
Anguishe, the King of Ireland; the Haut Prince,
Sir Galahault; the King o' the Hundred Knights;
The Kings of Scotland and of Brittany;
And many more renownèd knights whereof
The names are glorious. Also all the earls,
And all the dukes, and all the mighty men
And famous heroes of the Table Round,
From far Northumberland to where the wave
Rides rough on Devon from the outer main.
So that there was not seen for seven years,
Since when at Whitsuntide, Sir Galahad

Digitized by Google

Departed out of Carlyel from the court,
So fair a fellowship of goodly knights.

Then would King Arthur that the Queen should ride
With him from Carlyel to Camelot
To see the jousts. But she, because that yet
The sickness was upon her, answered nay.
Then said King Arthur: "This repenteth me.
For never hath been seen for seven years,
No, not since Galahad, at Whitsuntide,
Departed from us out of Carlyel,
So fair a fellowship of goodly knights."
But the Queen would not, and the King in wrath
Brake up the court, and rode to Astolat
On this side Camelot.
Now men said the Queen
Tarried behind because of Launcelot,
For Launcelot stayed to heal him of his wound.
And there had been estrangement 'twixt these two
I' the later time, because of bitter words.
So when the King with all his fellowship
Was ridden out of Carlyel, the Queen
Arose, and called to her Sir Launcelot.

Then to Sir Launcelot spoke Queen Guenevere.

"Not for the memory of that love whereof
No more than memory lives, but, sir, for that
Which even when love is ended yet endures
Making immortal life with deathless deeds,
Honor — true knighthood's golden spurs, the crown
And priceless diadem of peerless queens—
I make appeal to you, that hear perchance
The last appeal which I shall ever make.
So weigh my words not lightly! for I feel
The fluttering fires of life grow faint and cold
About my heart. And oft, indeed, to me
Lying whole hours awake in the dead nights
The end seems near, as though the darkness knew
The angel waiting there to call my soul
Perchance before the house awakes; and oft
When faint, and all at once, from far away,
The mournful midnight bells begin to sound
Across the river, all the days that were
(Brief, evil days!) return upon my heart,
And, where the sweetness seemed, I see the sin.
For, waking lone, long hours before the dawn,
Beyond the borders of the dark I seem
To see the twilight of another world,
That grows and grows and glimmers on my gaze.
And oft, when late, before the languorous moon
Through yonder windows to the west goes down
Among the pines, deep peace upon me falls,
Deep peace like death, so that I think I know
The blessèd Mary and the righteous saints
Stand at the throne, and intercede for me.
Wherefore these things are thus I cannot tell.
But now I pray you of your fealty,
And by all knightly faith which may be left,
Arise, and get you hence, and join the King.
For wherefore hold you thus behind the court,
Seeing my liege the King is moved in wrath?
For wete you well what say your foes and mine.
'See how Sir Launcelot and Queen Guenevere
Do hold them ever thus behind the King
That they may take their pleasure!' Knowing not
How that for me all these delights are come
To be as withered violets."

Half in tears
She ceased abrupt. Given up to a proud grief,
Vexed to be vexed. With love and anger moved.
Love touched with scorn, and anger pierced with love.
About her, all unheeded, her long hair
Loosed its warm, yellow, waving loveliness,
And o'er her bare and shining shoulder cold
Fell floating free. Upon one full white arm,
To which the amorous purple coverlet
Clung dimpling close, her drooping state was propped.
There, half in shadow of her soft gold curls,
She leaned, and like a rose enriched with dew,
Whose heart is heavy with the clinging bee,
Bowed down toward him all her glowing face,
While the light of her large angry eyes
Uprose, and rose, a slow imperious sorrow,
And o'er the shine of still, unquivering tears
Swam on to him.

But he, with brows averse
And orgolous looks, three times to speech addressed,
Three times in vain. The silence of the place
Fell like a hand upon his heart, and hushed
His foolish anger with authority.
He would not see the wretched Queen: he saw
Only the hunter on the arrassed wall
Prepare to wind amort his bugle-horn,
And the long daylight dying down the floors.
For half-way through the golden gates of eve
The sun was rolled. The dropping tapestry glowed
With awful hues. Far off among his reeds
The river, smitten with a waning light,
Shone: and, behind black lengths of pine revealed,
The red west smouldered, and the day declined.
Then year by year, as wave on wave a sea,
The tided Past came softly o'er his heart,
And all the days which had been.

So he stood
Long in his mind divided: with himself
At strife: and, like a steed that hotly chafes
His silver bit, which yet some silken rein
Swayed by a skilled accustomed hand restrains,
His heart against the knowledge of its love
Made vain revolt, and fretful rose and sunk.
But at the last, quelling a wayward grief,
That swelled against all utterance, and sought
To force its salt and sorrowful overflow
Upon weak language, "Now indeed," he cried,
"I see the face of the old time is changed,
And all things altered! Will the sun still burn?
Still burn the eternal stars? For love was deemed
Not less secure than these. Needs should there be
Something remarkable to prove the world
I am no more that Launcelot, nor thou
That Guenevere, of whom, long since, the fame,
Fruitful of noble deeds, with such a light
Did fill this nook and cantle of the earth,
That all great lands of Christendom beside
Showed darkened of their glory. But I see
That there is nothing left for men to swear by.

Digitized by Google

For then thy will did never urge me hence,
But drew me through all dangers to thy feet.
And none can say, least thou, I have not been
The staff and burgonet of thy fair fame.
Nor mind you, Madam, how in Surluse once,
When all the estates were met, and noble judges,
Armed clean with shields, set round to keep the right,
Before you sitting throned with Galahault
In great array, on fair green quilts of samyte,
Rich, ancient, fringed with gold, seven summer days,
And all before the Earls of Northgalies,
Such service then with this old sword was wrought,
To crown thy beauty in the courts of Fame,
That in that time fell many noble knights,
And all men marvelled greatly? So when last
The loud horns blew to lodging, and we supped
With Palamedes and with Lamorak,
All those great dukes and kings, and famous queens,
Beholding us with a deep joy, avouched
Across the golden cups of costly wine
'There is no queen of love but Guenevere,
And no true knight but Launcelot of the Lake!'"

Thus he, transported by the thought of days
And deeds that, like the mournful martial sounds
Blown through sad towns where some dead king goes by,
Made music in the chambers of his heart,
Swept by the mighty memory of the past.
Nor spake the sorrowful Queen, nor from deep muse
Unbent the grieving beauty of her brows,
But held her heart's proud pain superbly still.

But when he lifted up his looks, it seemed
Something of sadness in the ancient place,
Like dying breath from lips beloved of yore,
Or unforgotten touch of tender hands
After long years upon his spirit fell.
For near the carven casement hung the bird,
With hood and jess, that oft had led them forth,
These lovers through the heart of rippling woods
At morning, in the old and pleasant time.
And o'er the broidered canopies of state
Blazed Uther's dragons, curious, wrought with gems.
Then to his mind that dear and distant dawn
Came back, when first, a boy at Arthur's court,
He paused abashed before the youthful Queen.
And, feeling now her long imploring gaze
Holding him in its sorrow, when he marked
How changed her state, and all unlike to her,
The most renownèd beauty of the time,
And pearl of chivalry, for whom himself
All on a summer's day broke, long of yore,
A hundred lances in the field, he sprang
And caught her hand, and, falling to one knee,
Arched all his haughty neck to a quick kiss.
And there was silence. Silently the west
Grew red and redder, and the day declined.

As o'er the hungering heart of some deep sea,
That swells against the planets and the moon
With sad continual strife and vain unrest,
In silence rise and roll the laboring clouds
That bind the thunder, o'er the heaving heart
Of Guenevere all sorrows fraught with love,
All stormy sorrows, in that silence passed.
And like a star in that tumultuous night
Love waxed and waned, and came and went, changed hue,
And was and was not: till the cloud came down,
And all her soul dissolved in showers: and love
Rose through the broken storm: and, with a cry
Of passion sheathed in sharpest pain, she stretched
Wide her warm arms: she rose, she reeled, and fell
(All her great heart unqueened) upon the breast
Of Launcelot; and, lifting up her voice,
She wept aloud, "Unhappy that I am,"
She wept, "unhappy! Would that I had died
Long since, long ere I loved thee, Launcelot!
Would I had died long since! ere I had known
This pain, which hath become my punishment,
To have thirsted for the sea: to have received
A drop no bigger than a drop of dew!
I have done ill," she wept, "I am forlorn,
Forlorn! I falter where I stood secure:
The tower I built is fallen, is fallen: the staff
I leaned upon hath broken in my hand.
And I, disrobed, dethroned, discrowned, and all undone,
Survive my kingdom, widowed of all rule,
And men shall mock me for a foolish Queen.
For now I see thy love for me is dead,
Dead that brief love which was the light of life,
And all is dark: and I have lived too long.
For how henceforth, unhappy, shall I bear
To dwell among these halls where we have been?
How keep these chambers emptied of thy voice?
The walks where we have lingered long ago,
The gardens and the places of our love,
Which shall recall the days that come no more,
And all the joy which has been?"

Thus o'erthrown,
And on the breast of Launcelot weeping wild—
Weeping and murmuring—hung Queen Guenevere.
But, while she wept, upon her brows and lips
Warm kisses fell, warm kisses wet with tears.
For all his mind was melted with remorse,
And all his scorn was killed, and all his heart
Gave way in that caress, and all the love
Of happier years rolled down upon his soul
Redoubled; and he bowed his head, and cried:

"Though thou be variable as the waves,
More sharp than winds among the Hebrides
That shut the frozen Spring in stormy clouds,
As wayward as a child, and all unjust,
Yet must I love thee in despite of pain,
Thou peerless queen of perfect love! Thou star
That drawest all tides! Thou goddess far above
My heart's weak worship! so adored thou art,
And I so irretrievably all thine!
But now I will arise as thou hast said,
And join the King: and these thine enemies
Shall know thee not defenceless any more.
For, either, living, I yet hold my life
To arm for thine, or dying, by my death
Will steep love's injured honor in such blood

Digitized by Google

Shall wash out every stain! And so farewell,
Beloved. Forget me not when I am far,
But in thy prayers and in thine evening thoughts
Remember me: as I, when sundown crowns
The distant hills, and Ave-Mary rings,
Shall pine for thee on ways where thou art not."

So these two lovers in one long embrace,
An agony of reconcilement, hung
Blinded in tears and kisses, lip to lip,
And tranced from past to future time and space.

But by this time, the beam of the slope day,
Edging blue mountain glooms with sullen gold,
A dying fire, fell mournfully athwart
The purple chambers. In the courts below
The shadow of the keep from wall to wall
Shook his dark skirt: great chimes began to sound,
And swing, and rock in glimmering heights, and roll
A reeling music down: but ere it fell
Faint bells in misty spires adown the vale
Caught it, and bore it floating on to night.

So from that long love-trance the envious time
Reclaimed them. Then with a great pang he rose,
Like one that plucked his heart from out his breast,
And, bitterly unwinding her white arms
From the warm circle of their amorous fold,
Left living on her lips the lingering heat
Of one long kiss: and, gathering strongly back
His poured-out anguish to his soul, he went.

And the sun set.

Long whiles she sat alone,
Searching the silence with her fixèd eyes,
While far and farther off o'er distant floors
The intervals of brazen echoes fell.
A changeful light, from varying passions caught,
Flushed all her stately cheek from white to red
In doubtful alternation, as some star
Changes his fiery beauty: for her blood,
Set headlong to all wayward moods of sense,
Stirred with swift ebb and flow: till suddenly all
The frozen heights of grief fell loosed, fast, fast,
In cataract over cataract, on her soul.
Then at the last she rose, a reeling shape
That like a shadow swayed against the wall,
Her slight hand held upon her bosom, and fell
Before the Virgin Mother on her knees.
There, in a halo of the silver shrine,
That touched and turned to starlight her slow tears,
Below the feet of the pale-pictured saint
She lay, poured out in prayer.

Meanwhile, without,
A sighing rain from a low fringe of cloud
Whispered among the melancholy hills.
The night's dark limits widened: far above
The crystal sky lay open: and the star
Of eve, his rosy circlet trembling clear,
Grew large and bright, and in the silver moats,
Between the accumulated terraces,
Tangled a trail of fire: and all was still.

A BIRD AT SUNSET.

Wild bird, that wingest wide the glimmering moors,
Whither, by belts of yellowing woods, away?
What pausing sunset thy wild heart allures
Deep into dying day?

Would that my heart, on wings like thine, could pass
Where stars their light in rosy regions lose—
A happy shadow o'er the warm brown grass,
Falling with falling dews!

Hast thou, like me, some true-love of thine own,
In fairy-lands beyond the utmost seas;
Who there, unsolaced, yearns for thee alone,
And sings to silent trees?

O tell that woodbird that the summer grieves,
And the suns darken and the days grow cold;
And, tell her, love will fade with fading leaves,
And cease in common mould.

Fly from the winter of the world to her!
Fly, happy bird! I follow in thy flight,
Till thou art lost o'er yonder fringe of fir
In baths of crimson light.

My love is dying far away from me.
She sits and saddens in the fading west.
For her I mourn all day, and pine to be
At night upon her breast.

CHANGES.

Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed.
Time rules us all. And Life, indeed, is not
The thing we planned it out ere hope was dead.
And then, we women cannot choose our lot.

Much must be borne which it is hard to bear:
Much given away which it were sweet to keep.
God help us all! who need, indeed, his care.
And yet, I know, the Shepherd loves his sheep.

My little boy begins to babble now
Upon my knee his earliest infant prayer.
He has his father's eager eyes, I know.
And, they say too, his mother's sunny hair.

But when he sleeps and smiles upon my knee,
And I can feel his light breath come and go,
I think of one (Heaven help and pity me!)
Who loved me, and whom I loved, long ago.

Who might have been... ah, what I dare not think!
We all are changed. God judges for us best.
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,
And trust in Heaven humbly for the rest.

But blame us women not, if some appear
Too cold at times; and some too gay and light.
Some griefs gnaw deep. Some woes are hard to bear.
Who knows the Past? and who can judge us right?

Digitized by Google

Ah, were we judged by what we might have been,
And not by what we are, too apt to fall!
My little child—he sleeps and smiles between
These thoughts and me. In heaven we shall know all!

THE APPLE OF LIFE.

From the river Euphrates, the river whose source is in Paradise, far
As red Egypt—sole lord of the land and the sea, 'twixt the eremite star
Of the orient desert's lone dawn, and the porch of the chambers of rest
Where the great sea is girded with fire, and Orion returns in the west,
And the ships come and go in grand silence—King Solomon reigned. And behold,
In that time there was everywhere silver as common as stones be, and gold
That for plenty was 'counted as silver, and cedar as sycamore-trees
That are found in the vale, for abundance. For God to the king gave all these,
With glory exceeding; moreover, all kings of the earth to him came,
Because of his wisdom, to hear him. So great was King Solomon's fame.

And for all this the king's soul was sad. And his heart said within him: "Alas,
For man dies! if his glory abideth, himself from his glory shall pass.
And that which remaineth behind him, he seeth it not any more:
For how shall he know what comes after, who knoweth not what went before?
I have planted me gardens and vineyards, and gotten me silver and gold,
And my hand from whatever my heart hath desired I did not withhold:
And what profit have I in the works of my hands which I take not away?
I have searchèd out wisdom and knowledge: and what do they profit me, they?
As the fool dieth, so doth the wise. What is gathered is scattered again.
As the breath of the beasts, even so is the breath of the children of men:
And the same thing befalleth them both. And not any man's soul is his own."

This he thought, as he sat in his garden, and watched the great sun going down
In the glory thereof; and the earth and the sky, in that glory, became
Clothed clear with the gladness of color, and bathed in the beauty of flame.
And "Behold," said the king, "in a moment the glory shall vanish!" Even then,
While he spake, he was 'ware of a man drawing near him, who seemed to his ken
(By the hair in its blackness like flax that is burned in the hemp-dresser's shed,
And the brow's smoky hue, and the smouldering eyeball more livid than lead)
As the sons of the land that lies under the sword of the cherub whose wing
Wraps in wrath the shut gateways of Paradise. He, being come to the king,
Seven times made obeisance before him. To whom, "What art thou," the king cried,
"That thus unannounced to King Solomon comest?" The man, spreading wide
The palm of his right hand, showed in it an apple yet bright from the tree
In whose stem springs the life never-failing which Sin lost to Adam, when he,
Tasting knowledge forbidden, found death in the fruit of it . . . So doth the giver
Evil gifts to the evil apportion. And "Hail! let the king live forever!"
Bowing down at the feet of the monarch, and laughingly, even as one
Whose meaning, in joy or in jest, hovers hid 'twixt the word and the tone,
Said the stranger (as lightly the apple he dropped in the hand of the king),
"For lo ye! from 'twixt the four rivers of Eden, God gave me to bring
To his servant King Solomon, even to my lord that on Israel's throne
He hath 'stablished, this fruit from the Tree in whose branch Life abideth; for none
Shall taste death, having tasted this apple."
And therewith he vanished.

Remained
In the hand of the king the life-apple: ambrosial of breath, golden-grained,
Rosy-bright as a star dipped in sunset. The king turned it o'er, and perused
The fruit, which, alluring his lip, in his hand lay untasted.

He mused:
"Life is good: but not life in itself. Life eternal, eternally young,
That were life to be lived, or desired! Well it were if a man could prolong
The manhood that moves in the muscles, the rapture that mounts in the brain
When life at the prime, in the pastime of living, led on by the train
Of the jubilant senses, exulting goes forth, brave of body and spirit,
To conquer, choose, claim, and enjoy what 't was born to achieve or inherit.
The dance, and the festal procession! the pride in the strenuous play
Of the sinews that, eager for service, the will, though it wanton, obey!
When in veins lightly flowing, the fertile and bountiful impulses beat,
When the dews of the dawn of Desire on the roses of beauty are sweet:
And the eye glows with glances that kindle, the lip breathes the warmth that inspires,
And the hand hath yet vigor to seize the good thing which the spirit desires!
O well for the foot that bounds forward! and ever the wind it awakes
Lifts no lock from the forehead yet white, not a leaf that is withered yet shakes
From the loose flowers wreathing young tresses! and ever the earth and the skies
Abound in rich ardors, rejoicings, and raptures of endless surprise!

Digitized by Google

Life is sweet to the young that yet know not what life is. But life, after youth,
The gay liar, leaves hold of the bawble, and age, with his terrible truth,
Picks it up, and perceives it is broken, and knows it unfit to engage
The care it yet craves. . . Life eternal, eternally wedded to age!
What gain were in that? Why should any man seek what he loathes to prolong?
The twilight that darkens the eyeball: the dull ear that 's deaf to the song,
When the maidens rejoice, and the bride to the bridegroom, with music, is led:
The palsy that shakes 'neath the blossoms that fall from the chill bridal bed.
When the hand saith, '*I did*,' not '*I will do*,' the heart saith '*It was*,' not ''*T will be*,'
Too late in man's life is forever—too late comes this apple to me!"
Then the king rose. And lo, it was evening. And leaning, because he was old,
On the sceptre that, curiously sculptured in ivory garnished with gold,
To others a rod of dominion, to him was a staff for support,
Slow paced he the murmurous pathways where myrtles, in court up to court,
Mixed with roses in garden on garden, were ranged around fountains that fed
With cool music green odorous twilights; and so, never lifting his head
To look up from the way he walked wearily, he to the house of his pride
Reascended, and entered.

In cluster, high lamps, spices, odors, each side,
Burning inward and onward, from cinnamon ceilings, down distances vast
Of voluptuous vistas, illumined deep halls through whose silentness passed
King Solomon sighing; where columns colossal stood, gathered in groves
As the trees of the forest in Libanus—there where the wind, as it moves,
Whispers, "I, too, am Solomon's servant!"—huge trunks hid in garlands of gold,
On whose tops the skilled sculptors of Sidon had granted men's gaze to behold
How the phœnix that sits on the cedar's lone summit 'mid fragrance and fire,
Ever dying and living, hath loaded with splendors her funeral-pyre;
How the stork builds her nest on the pine-top; the date from the palm-branch depends;
And the shaft of the blossoming aloe soars crowning the life which it ends.
And from hall on to hall, in the doors, mute, magnificent slaves, watchful-eyed,
Bowed to earth as King Solomon passed them. And, passing, King Solomon sighed.
And, from hall on to hall pacing feebly, the king mused: . . . "O fair Shulamite!
Thy beauty is brighter than starlight on Hebron when Hebron is bright,
Thy sweetness is sweeter than Carmel. The king rules the nations; but thou,
Thou rulest the king, my belovèd."

So murmured King Solomon low
To himself, as he passed through the portal of porphyry, that dripped, as he passed,
From the myrrh-sprinkled wreaths on the locks and the lintels; and entered at last,
Still sighing, the sweet cedarn chamber, contrived for repose and delight,
Where the beautiful Shumalite slumbered. And straightway, to left and to right,
Bowing down as he entered, the spirits in bondage to Solomon, there
Keeping watch o'er his love, sank their swords, spread their wings, and evanished in air.
The king with a kiss woke the sleeper. And, showing the fruit in his hand,
"Behold! this was brought me erewhile by one coming," he said, "from the land
That lies under the sword of the Cherub. 'T was plucked by strange hands from the Tree
Of whose fruit whoso tasteth shall die not. And therefore I bring it to thee,
My belovèd. For thou of the daughters of women art fairest. And lo,
I, the king, I that love thee, whom men of man's sons have called wisest, I know
That in knowledge is sorrow. Much thought is much care. In the beauty of youth,
Not the wisdom of age, is enjoyment. Nor spring, is it sweeter, in truth,
Than winter, to roses once withered. The garment, though broidered with gold,
Fades apace where the moth frets the fibres. So I, in my glory, grow old.
And this life maketh mine (save the bliss of my soul in the beauty of thee)
No sweetness so great now that greatly unsweet 't were to lose what to me
Life prolonged, at its utmost, can promise. But thine, O thou spirit of bliss,
Thine is all that the living desire—youth, beauty, love, joy in all this!
And oh, were it not well for the praise of the world to maintain evermore
This mould of a woman, God's masterwork, made for mankind to adore?
Wherefore keep thou the gift I resign. Live forever, rejoicing in life!
And of women unborn yet the fairest shall still be King Solomon's wife."
So he said, and so dropped in her bosom the apple.

But when he was gone,
And the beautiful Shulamite, eying the gift of the king, sat alone
With the thoughts the king's words had awakened, as ever she turned and perused
The fruit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted—she mused:
"Life is good; but not life in itself. So is youth, so is beauty. Mere stuff
Are all these for Love's usance. To live, it is well; but it is not enough.
Well, too, to be fair, to be young; but what good is in beauty and youth
If the lovely and young are not surer than they that be neither, forsooth,
Young nor lovely, of being beloved? O my love, if thou lovest not me,
Shall I love my own life? Am I fair, if not fair, Azariah, to thee?"
Then she hid in her bosom the apple. And rose.

Digitized by Google

And, reversing the ring
That, inscribed with the word that works wonders, and signed with the seal of the king,
Hath o'er spirits and demons dominion—(for she, for a plaything, erewhile
From King Solomon's awful forefinger, had won it away with a smile)—
The beautiful Shulamite folded her veil o'er her forehead and eyes,
And, with footsteps that fleeted as silent and swift as a bird's shadow flies,
Unseen from the palace, she passed, and passed down to the city unseen,
Unseen passed the green garden-wicket, the vineyard, the cypresses green,
And stood by the doors of the house of the Prince Azariah. And cried,
In the darkness she cried: "Azariah, awaken! ope, ope to me wide!
Ope the door, ope the lattice! Arise! Let me in, O my love! It is I.
Thee, the bride of King Solomon, loveth. Love, tarry not. Love, shall I die
At thy doors? I am sick of desire. For my love is more comely than gold.
More precious to me is my love than the throne of a king that is old.
Behold, I have passed through the city, unseen of the watchmen. I stand
By the doors of the house of my love, till my love lead me in by the hand."
Azariah arose. And unbolted the door to the fair Shulamite.
"O my queen, what dear folly is this, that hath led thee alone, and by night,
To the house of King Solomon's servant? For lo you, the watchmen awake.
And much for my own, O my queen, must I fear, and much more for thy sake.
For at that which is done in the chamber the leek on the housetop shall peep:
And the hand of the king it is heavy: the eyes of a king never sleep:
But the bird of the air beareth news to the king, and the stars of the sky
Are as soldiers by night on the turrets. I fear, O my queen, lest we die."
"Fear thou not, O my love! Azariah, fear nothing. For lo, what I bring!
'T is the fruit of the Tree that in paradise God hideth under the wing
Of the Cherub that chased away Adam. And whoso this apple doth eat
Shall live—live forever! And since unto me my own life is less sweet
Than thy love, Azariah (sweet only thy love maketh life unto me!)
Therefore eat! Live, and love, for life's sake, still, the love that gives life unto thee!"
Then she held to his lips the life-apple, and kissed him.

But soon as alone,
Azariah leaned out from his lattice, he muttered, "'T is well! She is gone."
While the fruit in his hand lay untasted. "Such visits," he mused, "may cost dear.
In the love of the great is great danger, much trouble, and care more than cheer."

Then he laughed, and stretched forth his strong arms. For he heard from the streets of the city
The song of the women that sing in the doors after dark their love-ditty,
And the clink of the wine-cup, the voice of the wanton, the tripping of feet,
And the laughter of youths running after, allured him. And "*Life, it is sweet*
While it lasts," sang the women, "*and sweeter the good minute, in that it goes,*
For who, if the rose bloomed forever, so greatly would care for the rose?
Wherefore haste! pluck the time in the blossom."
The prince mused, "The counsel is well."
And the fruit to his lips he uplifted: yet paused. "Who is he that can tell
What his days shall bring forth? Life forever . . . But what sort of life? Ah, the doubt!"
'Neath his cloak then he thrust back the apple And opened the door and passed out
To the house of the harlot Egyptian. And mused, as he went: "Life is good:
But not life in itself. It is well while the wine-cup is hot in the blood,
And a man goeth whither he listeth, and doeth the thing that he will,
And liveth his life as he lusteth, and taketh in freedom his fill
Of the pleasure that pleaseth his humor, and feareth no snare by the way.
Shall I care to be loved by a queen, if my pride with my freedom I pay?
Better far is a handful in quiet than both hands, though filled to overflow
With pride, in vexation of spirit. And sweeter the roses that blow
From the wild seeds the wind, where he wanders, with heedless beneficence flings,
Than those that are guarded by dragons to brighten the gardens of kings.
Let a man take his chance, and be happy. The hart, though hard pressed by the hounds,
When the horn of the hunter hath scattered the herd from the hills where it sounds,
Is more to be envied, though death with his dart follow fast to destroy,
Than the tame beast that, pent in the paddock, tastes neither the danger nor joy
Of the mountain, and all its surprises. The main thing is, not to live *long*,
But to *live*. Better moments of rapture soon ended than ages of wrong.
Life's feast is best spiced by the flavor of death in it. Just the one chance
To lose it to-morrow the life that a man lives to-day doth enhance.
The may-be for me, not the must-be! Best flourish while flourish the flowers,
And fall ere the frost falls. The dead, do they rest or arise with new powers?
Either way, well for them. Mine, meanwhile, be the cup of life's fulness to-night.
And to-morrow . . . Well, time to consider" (he felt at the fruit). "What delight
Of his birthright had Esau, when hungry? To-day with its pottage is sweet.
For a man cannot feed and be full on the faith of to-morrow's baked meat.

Digitized by Google

Open! open, my dark-eyed beguiler of darkness!"
Up rose to his knock,
Light of foot, the lascivious Egyptian, and lifted the latch from the lock,
And opened. And led in the prince to her chamber, and shook out her hair,
Dark, heavy, and humid with odors; her bosom beneath it laid bare,
And sleek sallow shoulder; and sloped back her face, as, when falls the slant south
In wet whispers of rain, flowers bend back to catch it; so she, with shut mouth
Half unfolding for kisses; and sank, as they fell, 'twixt his knees, with a laugh,
On the floor, in a flood of deep hair flung behind her full throat; held him half
Aloof with one large languid arm, while the other up-propped, where she lay,
Limbs flowing in fulness and lucid in surface as waters at play,
Though in firmness as slippery marble. Anon she sprang loose from his clasp,
And whirled from the table a flagon of silver twined round by an asp
That glittered—rough gold and red rubies; and poured him, and praised him, the wine
Wherewith she first brightened the moist lip that murmured: "Ha, fool! art thou mine?
I am thine. This will last for an hour." Then, humming strange words of a song,
Sung by maidens in Memphis the old, when they bore the Crowned Image along,
Apples yellow and red from a basket with vine-leaves o'erlaid she 'gan take,
And played with, peeled, tossed them, and caught them, and bit them, for idleness' sake;
But the rinds on the floor she flung from her, and laughed at the figures they made,
As her foot pushed them this way and that way together. And, "Look, fool," she said,
"It is all sour fruit, this! But those I fling from me—see here by the stain!—
Shall carry the mark of my teeth in their flesh. Could they feel but the pain,
O my soul, how these teeth should go through them! Fool, fool, what good gift dost thou bring?
For thee have I sweetened with cassia my chambers." "A gift for a king."
Azariah laughed loud; and tossed to her the apple. "This comes from the Tree
Of whose fruit whoso tastes lives forever. I care not. I give it to thee.
Nay, witch! 't is worth more than the shekels of gold thou hast charmed from my purse.
Take it. Eat. Life is sweeter than knowledge: and Eve, thy sly mother, fared worse,
O thou white-toothèd taster of apples!" "Thou liest, fool?" "Taste, then, and try.
For the truth of the fruit 's in the eating. 'T is thou art the serpent, not I."
And the strong man laughed loud as he pushed at her lip the life-apple. She caught
And held it away from her, musing; and muttered . . . "Go to! It is naught.
Fool, why dost thou laugh?" And he answered: "Because, witch, it tickles my brain
Intensely to think that all we, that be something while yet we remain,
We, the princes of people—ay, even the King's self—shall die in our day,
And thou, that art Nothing, shall sit on our graves, with our grandsons, and play."
So he said, and laughed louder.

But when, in the gray of the dawn, he was gone,
And the wan light waxed large in the window, as she on her bed sat alone,
With the fuuit that, alluring her lip, in her hand lay untasted, perusing,
Perplexed, the gay gift of the prince, the dark woman thereat fell a musing,
And she thought: . . . "What is Life without Honor? And what can the life that I live
Give to me, I shall care to continue, not caring for aught it can give?
I, despising the fools that despise me—a plaything not pleasing myself—
Whose life, for the pelf that maintains it, must sell what is paid not by pelf!
I? . . . . the man called me Nothing. He said well. 'The great in their glory must go.'
And why should I linger, whose life leadeth nowhere?—a life which I know
To name is to shame—struck, unsexed, by the world from its list of the lives
Of the women whose womanhood, saved, gets them leave to be mothers and wives.
And the fancies of men change. And bitterly bought is the bread that I eat;
For, though purchased with body and spirit, when purchased 't is yet all unsweet."
Her tears fell: they fell on the apple. She sighed . . . "Sour fruit, like the rest!
Let it go with the salt tears upon it. Yet life . . . it were sweet if possessed
In the power thereof, and the beauty. 'A gift for a king' . . . did he say?
Ay, a king's life is life as it should be—a life like the light of the day,
Wherein all that liveth rejoiceth. For is not the king as the sun
That shineth in heaven and seemeth both heaven and itself all in one?
Then to whom may this fruit, the life-giver, be worthily given? Not me.
Nor the fool Azariah that sold it for folly. The king! only he—
Only he hath the life that 's worth living forever. Whose life, not alone
Is the life of the king, but the life of the many made mighty in one.
To the king will I carry this apple. And he (for the hand of a king
Is a fountain of hope) in his handmaid shall honor the gift that I bring.
And men for this deed shall esteem me, with Rahab by Israel praised,
As first among those who, though lowly, their shame into honor have raised:
Such honor as lasts when life goes, and, while life lasts, shall lift it above
What, if loved by the many I loathe, must be loathed by the few I could love."

So she rose, and went forth through the city. And with her the apple she bore
In her bosom: and stood 'mid the multitude, waiting therewith in the door

Digitized by Google

Of the hall where the king, to give judgment, ascended at morning his throne:
And kneeling there, cried: "Let the king live forever! Behold, I am one
Whom the vile of themselves count the vilest. But great is the grace of my lord.
And now let my lord on his handmaid look down, and give ear to her word."
Thereat, in the witness of all, she drew forth, and (uplifting her head)
Showed the Apple of Life, which who tastes, tastes not death. "And this apple," she said,
"Last night was delivered to me, that thy servant should eat, and not die.
But I said to the soul of thy servant, 'Not so. For behold, what am I?
That the king, in his glory and gladness, should cease from the light of the sun,
Whiles I, that am least of his slaves, in my shame and abasement live on.'
For not sweet is the life of thy servant, unless to thy servant my lord
Stretch his hand, and show favor. For surely the frown of a king is a sword,
But the smile of the king is as honey that flows from the clefts of the rock,
And his grace is as dew that from Horeb descends on the heads of the flock:
In the king is the heart of a host: the king's strength is an army of men:
And the wrath of the king is a lion that roareth by night from his den:
But as grapes from the vines of En-Gedi are favors that fall from his hands,
And as towers on the hill-tops of Shenir the throne of King Solomon stands.
And for this, it were well that forever the king, who is many in one,
Should sit, to be seen through all time, on a throne 'twixt the moon and the sun!
For how shall one lose what he hath not? Who hath, let him keep what he hath.
Wherefore I to the king give this apple."

Then great was King Solomon's wrath,
And he rose, rent his garment, and cried, "Woman, whence came this apple to thee?"
But when he was 'ware of the truth, then his heart was awakened. And he
Knew at once that the man who, erewhile, unawares coming to him, had brought
That Apple of Life was, indeed, God's good Angel of Death. And he thought:
"In mercy, I doubt not, when man's eyes were opened and made to see plain
All the wrong in himself, and the wretchedness, God sent to close them again
For man's sake, his last friend upon earth—Death, the servant of God, who is just.
Let man's spirit to Him whence it cometh return, and his dust to the dust!"

Then the Apple of Life did King Solomon seal in an urn that was signed
With the seal of Oblivion: and summoned the Spirits that walk in the wind
Unseen on the summits of mountains, where never the eagle yet flew;
And these he commanded to bear far away—out of reach, out of view,
Out of hope, out of memory—higher than Ararat buildeth his throne,
In the Urn of Oblivion the Apple of Life.

But on green jasper-stone
Did the king write the story thereof for instruction. And Enoch, the seer,
Coming afterward, searched out the meaning. And he that hath ears let him hear.

RETROSPECTIONS.

To-night she will dance at the Palace,
With the diamonds in her hair:
And the Prince will praise her beauty—
The loveliest lady there!

But tones, at times, in the music
Will bring back forgotten things:
And her heart will fail her sometimes,
When her beauty is praised at the King's.

There sits in his silent chamber
A stern and sorrowful man:
But a strange sweet dream comes to him,
While the lamp is burning wan,

Of a sunset among the vineyards
In a lone and lovely land,
And a maiden standing near him,
With fresh wild-flowers in her hand.

SONG.

Flow, freshly flow,
Dark stream, below!
While stars grow light above:
By willowy banks, through lonely downs,
Past terraced walls in silent towns,
And bear me to my love!

Still, as we go,
Blow, gently blow,
Warm wind, and blithely move
These dreamy sails, that slowly glide—
A shadow on the shining tide
That bears me to my love.

Fade, sweetly fade
In dewy shade
On lonely grange and grove,
O lingering Day! and bring the Night
Though all her milk-white mazes bright
That tremble o'er my love.

The sunset wanes
From twinkling panes.
Dim, misty myriads move
Down glimmering streets. One light I see—
One happy light, that shines for me,
And lights me to my love!

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM MORRIS.

WILLIAM MORRIS was born near London in 1834. His father was a merchant, who died in 1844 and left a large estate. William studied at Forest School in Walthamstow, at Marlborough, and at Exeter College, Oxford. He studied painting and executed a few unsuccessful pictures, and then gave up the profession. In 1858 he published "The Defence of Guenevere, and other Poems," which then attracted no attention whatever, but was republished and favorably reviewed after he had become famous.

In 1863, with several partners, he began the artistic designing and manufacture of wall-paper, stained glass, and other household decorations and furniture. The establishment has been entirely successful, and its business has rapidly increased. Morris and his partners are in their shop every day, inventing new designs or improving old ones; and the head of the house regularly gives his evenings to writing poetry.

In 1867 he published "The Life and Death of Jason," which at once drew the attention of the critics and the poetry-reading public. In 1868–'71 he published "The Earthly Paradise," in four parts, named from the seasons; and since then he has been generally accorded the first place among the British poets who have risen since Tennyson. This poem tells of a company who sailed westward from Norway to find the earthly paradise. After many wanderings they came to a strange land, where they were hospitably received, and spent the remainder of their lives. At the semi-monthly feasts they entertained the people with tales of the world from which they came. Twenty-four of these tales, some from Greek and Roman history and mythology, and some from Northern legends, make up the body of the work. Mr. Morris has since published "Love is Enough; or the Freeing of Pharamond," 1873; a translation of "The Æneids of Virgil," 1875; and, in connection with Eirikr Magnusson, "The Story of the Volsungs and the Niblungs," from the Eddas, 1874.

THE DEATH OF PARIS.

ARGUMENT.

PARIS the son of Priam was wounded by one of the poisoned arrows of Hercules that Philoctetes bore to the siege of Troy; wherefore he had himself borne up into Ida that he might see the nymph Œnone, whom he once had loved, because she, who knew many secret things, alone could heal him; but when he had seen her and spoken with her, she would deal with the matter in no wise, wherefore Paris died of that hurt.

IN the last month of Troy's beleaguerment,
When both sides, waiting for some God's great hand,
But seldom o'er the meads the war-shout sent,
Yet idle rage would sometimes drive a band
From town or tent about Troy-gate to stand
All armed, and there to bicker aimlessly;
And so at least the weary time wore by.

In such a fight, when wide the arrows flew,
And little glory fell to any there,
And naught there seemed for a stout man to do,
Rose Philoctetes from the ill-roofed lair
That hid his rage, and crept out into air,
And strung his bow, and slunk down to the fight,
'Twixt rusty helms, and shields that once were bright.

And even as he reached the foremost rank,
A glimmer as of polished steel and gold
Amid the war-worn Trojan folk, that shrank
To right and left, his fierce eyes could behold;
He heard a shout, as if one man were bold
About the streams of Simoeis that day—
One heart still ready to play out the play.

Therewith he heard a mighty bowstring twang,
And a shaft screamed 'twixt hostile band and band,
And close beside him fell, with clash and clang,
A well-tried warrior from the Cretan land,
And rolled in dust, clutching with desperate hand
At the gay feathers of the shaft that lay
Deep in his heart, well silenced from that day.

Then of the Greeks did man look upon man,
When Philoctetes from his quiver drew
A dreadful shaft, and through his fingers ran
The dull-red feathers; of strange steel and blue
The barbs were, such as archer never knew,
But black as death the thin-forged bitter point,
That with the worm's blood fate did erst anoint.

He shook the shaft, and notched it, and therewith
Forth from the Trojans rang that shout again,

Digitized by Google

Whistled the arrow, and a Greek did writhe
Once more upon the earth in his last pain;
While the gray clouds, big with the threat of rain,
Parted a space, and on the Trojans shone,
And struck a glory from that shining one.

Then Philoctetes scowled, and cried: "O Fate,
I give thee this, thy strong man gave to me.
Do with it as thou wilt!—let small or great
E'en as thou wilt before its black point be!
Late grows the year, and stormy is the sea,
The oars lie rotten by the gunwales now
That nevermore a Grecian surf shall know."

He spake and drew the string with careless eyes,
And, as the shaft flew forth, he turned about
And tramped back slowly, noting in no wise
How from the Greeks uprose a joyous shout,
And from the Trojan host therewith brake out
Confused clamor, and folk cried the name
Of him wherethrough the weary struggle came,

Paris the son of Priam! then once more
O'er head of leaguer and beleaguered town
Gray grew the sky, a cold sea-wind swept o'er
The ruined plain, and the small rain drove down,
While slowly underneath that chilling frown
Parted the hosts; sad Troy into its gates,
Greece to its tents, and waiting on the fates.

Next day the seaward-looking gates none swung
Back on their hinges, whatso Greek might fare,
With seeming-careless mien, and bow unstrung,
Anigh them; whatso rough-voiced horn might dare
With well-known notes, the war-worn warders there;
Troy slept amid its nightmares through the day,
And dull with waking dreams the leaguer lay.

Yet in the streets did man say unto man:
"Hector is dead, and Troilus is dead;
Æneas turneth toward the waters wan;
In his fair house Antenor hides his head;
Fast from the tree of Troy the boughs are shred;
And now this Paris, now this joyous one,
Is the cry cried that biddeth him begone?"

But on the morrow's dawn, ere yet the sun
Had shone athwart the mists of last night's rain,
And shone the image of the Spotless One
Unto the tents and hovels of the plain
Whose girth of war she long had made all vain,
From out a postern looking toward the north
A little band of silent men went forth.

And in their midst a litter did they bear
Whereon lay one with linen wrapped around,
Whose wan face turned unto the fresher air
As though a little pleasure he had found
Amidst of pain; some dreadful torturing wound
The man endured belike, and as a balm
Was the fresh morn, with all its rest and calm,

After the weary tossing of the night
And close dim-litten chamber, whose dusk seemed
Laboring with whispers fearful of the light,
Confused with images of dreams long dreamed,
Come back again, now that the lone torch gleamed
Dim before eyes that saw naught real as true
To vex the heart that naught of purpose knew.

Upon the late-passed night in e'en such wise
Had Paris lain. What time like years of life,
Had passed before his weary heart and eyes!
What hopeless, nameless longings! what wild strife
'Gainst naught for naught, with wearying changes rife,
Had he gone through, till in the twilight gray
They bore him through the cold deserted way.

Mocking and strange the streets looked now, most meet
For a dream's ending, for a vain life's end;
While sounded his strong litter-bearers' feet,
Like feet of men who through Death's country wend
Silent, for fear lest they should yet offend
The grim King satisfied to let them go,
Hope bids them hurry, fear's chain makes them slow.

In feverish doze of time agone he thought,
When love was soft, life strong, and a sweet name,
The first sweet name that led him down love's ways,
Unbidden ever to his fresh lips came;
Half witting would he speak it, and for shame
Flush red, and think what folk would deem thereof
If they might know Œnone was his love.

And now Œnone no more love of his,
He worn with war and passion—must he pray:
"O thou, I loved and love not, life and bliss
Lie in thine hands to give or take away;
O heal me, hate me not! think of the day
When as thou thinkest still, e'en so I thought,
That all the world without thy love was naught."

Yea, he was borne forth such a prayer to make,
For she alone of all the world, they said,
The thirst of that dread poison now might slake,
For midst the ancient wise ones nurtured
On peaceful Ida, in the lore long dead,
Lost to the hurrying world, right wise she was,
Mighty to bring most wondrous things to pass.

Was the world worth the minute of that prayer
If yet her love, despised and cast aside,
Should so shine forth that she should heal him there?
He knew not and he recked not; fear and pride
'Neath Helen's kiss and Helen's tears had died,
And life was love, and love too strong that he
Should catch at Death to save him misery.

So with soul drifting down the stream of love,
He let them bear him through the fresh fair morn,
From out Troy-gates; and no more now he strove

Digitized by Google

To battle with the wild dreams, newly born
From that past night of toil and pain forlorn;
No farewell did he mutter 'neath his breath
To failing Troy, no eyes he turned toward death.

Troy dwindled now behind them, and the way
That round about the feet of Ida wound,
They left; and up a narrow vale, that lay,
Grassy and soft betwixt the pine-woods bound,
They went, and ever gained the higher ground,
For as a trench the little valley was
To catch the runnels that made green its grass.

Now ere that green vale narrowed to an end,
Blocked by a shaly slip thrust bleak and bare
From the dark pine-wood's edge, as men who wend
Upon a well-known way, they turned them there,
And through the pine-wood's dusk began to fare
By blind ways, till all noise of bird and wind
Amid that odorous night was left behind.

And in meanwhile deepened the languid doze
That lay on Paris into slumber deep,
O'er his unconscious heart, and eyes shut close,
The image of that very place 'gan creep,
And twelve years younger in his dreamful sleep,
Light-footed, through the awful wood he went,
With beating heart, on lovesome thoughts intent.

Dreaming, he went, till thinner and more thin,
And bright with growing day, the pine-wood grew,
Then to an open rugged space did win;
Whence a close beech-wood was he passing through,
Whose every tall white stem full well he knew;
Then seemed to stay awhile for loving shame,
When to the brow of the steep bank he came,

Where still the beech-trunks o'er the mast-strewn ground
Stood close, and slim and tall, but hid not quite
A level grassy space they did surround
On every side save one, that to the light
Of the clear western sky, cold now, but bright,
Was open, and the thought of the far sea,
Toward which a small brook tinkled merrily.

Him seemed he lingered there, then stepped adown
With troubled heart into the soft green place,
And up the eastmost of the beech-slopes brown
He turned about a lonesome, anxious face,
And stood to listen for a little space
If any came, but naught he seemed to hear
Save the brook's babble and the beech-leaves' stir.

And then he dreamed great longing o'er him came;
Too great, too bitter of those days to be
Long past, when love was born amidst of shame;
He dreamed that, as he gazed full eagerly
Into the green dusk between tree and tree,
His trembling hand slid down the horn to take
Wherewith he erst was wont his herd to wake.

Trembling, he set it to his lips, and first
Breathed gently through it; then strained hard to blow,
For dumb, dumb was it grown, and no note burst
From its smooth throat; and ill thoughts poisoned now
The sweetness of his dream; he murmured low:
"Ah! dead and gone, and ne'er to come again;
Ah, past away! ah, longed for long in vain!

"Lost love, sweet Helen, come again to me!"
Therewith he dreamed he fell upon the ground
And hid his face, and wept out bitterly,
But woke with fall and torturing tears, and found
He lay upon his litter, and the sound,
Of feet departing from him did he hear,
And rustling of the last year's leaves anear.

But in the self-same place he lay indeed,
Weeping and sobbing, and scarce knowing why;
His hand clutched hard the horn that erst did lead
The dew-lapped neat round Ida merrily;
He strove to raise himself, he strove to cry
That name of Helen once, but then withal
Upon him did the load of memory fall.

Quiet he lay a space, while o'er him drew
The dull, chill cloud of doubt and sordid fear,
As now he thought of what he came to do,
And what a dreadful minute drew anear;
He shut his eyes, and now no more could hear
His litter-bearers' feet; as lone he felt
As though amid the outer wastes he dwelt.

Amid that fear a minute naught and vain
His life and love seemed; with a dreadful sigh
He raised his arm, and soul's and body's pain
Tore at his heart with new-born agony
As a thin quavering note; a ghost-like cry
Rang from the long-unused lips of the horn,
Spoiling the sweetness of the happy morn.

He let the horn fall down upon his breast
And lie there, and his hand fell to his side;
And there indeed his body seemed to rest,
But restless was his soul, and wandered wide
Through a dim maze of lusts unsatisfied;
Thoughts half thought out, and words half said, and deeds
Half done, unfruitful, like o'ershadowed weeds.

His eyes were shut now, and his dreams hot tears
Were dry upon his cheek; the sun grown high
Had slain the wind, when smote upon his ears
A sudden rustling in the beech-leaves dry:
Then came a pause; then footsteps drew anigh
O'er the deep grass; he shuddered, and in vain
He strove to turn, despite his burning pain.

Then through his half-shut eyes he seemed to see
A woman drawing near, and held his breath,
And clutched at the white linen eagerly,
And felt a greater fear than fear of death,
A greater pain than that love threateneth,
As soft low breathing o'er his head he heard,
And thin fine linen raiment gently stirred.

Digitized by Google

Then spoke a sweet voice close, ah, close to him:
"Thou sleepest, Paris? would that I could sleep!
On the hillside do I lay limb to limb,
And lie day-long watching the shadows creep
And change, till day is gone, and night is deep,
Yet sleep not ever, wearied with the thought
Of all a little lapse of time has brought.

"Sleep, though thou callest me! yet 'mid thy dream
Hearken, the while I tell about my life,
The life I led, while 'mid the steely gleam
Thou wert made happy with the joyous strife;
Or in the soft arms of the Greek king's wife
Wouldst still moan out that day had come too soon,
Calling the dawn the glimmer of the moon.

"Wake not, wake not, before the tale is told!
Not long to tell, the tale of those ten years!
A gnawing pain that never groweth old,
A pain that shall not be washed out by tears;
A dreary road the weary foot-sole wears,
Knowing no rest, but going to and fro,
Treading it harder 'neath the weight of woe.

"No middle, no beginning, and no end;
No staying-place, no thought of anything,
Bitter or sweet, with that one thought to blend;
No least joy left that I away might fling
And deem myself grown great; no hope to cling
About me, naught but dull, unresting pain,
That made all memory sick, all striving vain.

"Thou—hast thou thought thereof, perchance anights
—In early dawn, and shuddered, and then said,
'Alas, poor soul! yet hath she had delights,
For none are wholly hapless but the dead.'
Liar! O liar! my woe upon thine head,
My agony that naught can take away!
Awake, arise, O traitor, unto day!"

Her voice rose as she spoke, till loud and shrill
It rang about the place; but when at last
She ended, and the echoes from the hill,
Woful and wild, back o'er the place were cast,
From her lost love a little way she passed
Trembling, and looking round as if afeard
At those ill sounds that through the morn she heard.

Then still she stood, her clenched hands slim and white
Relaxed, her drawn brow smoothed; with a great sigh
Her breast heaved, and she muttered: "Ere the light
Of yesterday had faded from the sky
I knew that he would seek me certainly;
And, knowing it, yet feigned I knew it not,
Or with what hope, what hope my heart was hot.

"That tumult in my breast I might not name—
Love should I call it?—nay, my life was love
And pain these ten years—should I call it shame?
What shame my weary waiting might reprove
After ten years?—or pride?—what pride could move
After ten years this heart within my breast?
Alas! I lied—I lied, and called it rest.

"I called it rest, and wandered through the night;
Upon my river's flowery bank I stood,
And thought its hurrying changing black and white
Stood still beneath the moon, that hill and wood
Were moving round me, and I deemed it good
The world should change so, deemed it good, that day
Forever into night had passed away.

"And still I wandered through the night, and still
Things changed, and changed not round me, and the day—
This day wherein I am, had little will
With dreadful truth to drive the night away—
God knows if for its coming I did pray!
God knows if at the last in twilight-tide
My hope—my hope undone I more might hide."

Then looked she toward the litter as she spake,
And slowly drew anigh it once again,
And from her worn tried heart there did outbreak
Wild sobs and weeping, shameless of its pain,
Till as the storm of passion 'gan to wane
She looked and saw the shuddering misery
Wherein her love of the old days did lie.

Still she wept on, but gentler now withal,
And passed on till above the bier she stood
Watching the well-wrought linen rise and fall
Beneath his faltering breath, and still her blood
Ran fiery hot with thoughts of ill and good,
Pity and scorn, and love and hate, as she,
Half dead herself, gazed on his misery.

At last she spake: "This tale I told e'en now,
Know'st thou 'mid dreams what woman suffered this?
Canst thou not dream of the old days, and how
Full oft thy lips would say 'twixt kiss and kiss
That all of bliss was not enough of bliss
My loveliness and kindness to reward,
That for thy Love the sweetest life was hard?

"Yea, Paris, have I not been kind to thee?
Did I not live thy wishes to fulfil?
Wert thou not happy when thou lovedst me,
What dream then did we have of change or ill?
Why must thou needs change? I am unchanged still;
I need no more than thee—what needst thou
But that we might be happy, yea e'en now?"

He opened hollow eyes and looked on her,
And stretched a trembling hand out; ah, who knows
With what strange mingled look of hope and fear,

Digitized by Google

Of hate and love, their eyes met! Come so close
Once more, that everything they now might lose
Amid the flashing out of that old fire,
The short-lived uttermost of all desire.

He spake not, shame and other love there lay
Too heavy on him; but she spake again:
"E'en now at the beginning of the day,
Weary with hope and fear and restless pain,
I said—Alas, I said, if all be vain
And he will have no pity, yet will I
Have pity—how shall kindness e'er pass by?"

He drew his hand aback, and laid it now
Upon the swathings of his wound, but she
Set her slim hand upon her knitted brow
And gazed on him with bright eyes eagerly;
Nor cruel looked her lips that once would be
So kind, so longed for; neither spake awhile,
Till in her face there shone a sweet strange smile.

She touched him not, but yet so near she came
That on his very face he felt her breath;
She whispered: "Speak! thou wilt not speak for shame,
I will not grant for love, and gray-winged Death
Meanwhile above our folly hovereth;
Speak! was it not all false, is it not done?
Is not the dream dreamed out, the dull night gone?

"Hearkenest thou, Paris? O look kind on me!
I hope no more indeed, but couldst thou turn
Kind eyes to me, then much for me and thee
Might love do yet. Doth not the old fire burn?
Doth not thine heart for words of old days yearn?
Canst thou not say—Alas, what wilt thou say,
Since I have put by hope for many a day?

"Paris, I hope no more, yet while ago—
Take it not ill if I must needs say this—
A while ago I cried: Ah! no, no, no!
It is no love at all, this love of his,
He loves her not, I it was had the bliss
Of being the well-beloved—dead is his love,
For surely none but I his heart may move."

She wept still; but his eyes grew wild and strange
With that last word, and harder his face grew
Though her tear-blinded eyes saw not the change.
Long beat about his heart false words and true,
A veil of strange thought he might not pierce through,
Of hope he might not name, clung round about
His wavering heart, perplexed with death and doubt.

Then trembling did he speak: "I love thee still,
Surely I love thee." But a dreadful pain
Shot through his heart, and strange presage of ill
As like the ceasing of the summer rain
Her tears stopped, and she drew aback again,
Silent a moment, till a bitter cry
Burst from her lips grown white with agony.

A look of pity came across his face
Despite his pain and horror, and her eyes
Saw it, and changed, and for a little space
Panting she stood, as one checked by surprise
Amidst of passion; then in tender wise,
Kneeling, she 'gan the bandages undo
That hid the place the bitter shaft tore through.

Then when the wound and his still face and white
Lay there before her, she 'gan tremble sore,
For images of hope and past delight,
Not to be named once, 'gan her heart flit o'er;
Blossomed the longing in her heart, and bore
A dreadful thought of uttermost despair,
That all if gained would be no longer fair.

In dull low words she spake: "Yea, so it is,
That thou art near thy death, and this thy wound
I yet may heal, and give thee back what bliss
The ending of thy life may yet surround:
Mock not thyself with hope! the Trojan ground
Holds tombs, not houses now, all Gods are gone
From out your temples but cold Death alone.

"Lo, if I heal thee, and thou goest again
Back unto Troy, and she, thy new love, sees
Thy lovesome body freed from all its pain,
And yet awhile amid the miseries
Of Troy ye twain lie loving, well at ease,
Yet 'midst of this while she is asking thee
What kind soul made thee whole and well to be.

"And thou art holding back my name with lies,
And thinking, maybe, Paris, of this face—
E'en then the Greekish flame shall sear your eyes,
The clatter of the Greeks fill all the place,
While she, my woe, the ruin of thy race,
Looking toward changed days, a new crown, shall stand,
Her fingers trembling in her husband's hand.

"Thou I called love once, wilt thou die e'en thus,
Ruined 'midst ruin, ruining, bereft
Of name and honor? O love, piteous
That but for this were all the hard things cleft
That lay 'twixt us and love; till naught was left
'Twixt thy lips and my lips! O hard that we
Were once so full of all felicity!

"O love, O Paris, know'st thou this of me
That in these hills e'en such a name I have
As being akin to a divinity;
And lightly may I slay and lightly save;
Nor know I surely if the peaceful grave
Shall ever hide my body dead—behold,
Have ten long years of misery made me old?"

Sadly she laughed: and rising wearily
Stood by him in the fresh and sunny morn;
The image of his youth and faith gone by
She seemed to be, for one short minute born
To make his shamed lost life seem more forlorn;
He shut his eyes and moaned, but once again
She knelt beside him and the weary pain

Digitized by Google

Deepened upon her face. "Hearken!" she said,
"Death is anear thee; is then death so ill
With me anigh thee—since Troy is as dead,
Ere many tides the Xanthus' mouth shall fill,
And thou art reft of her that harmed me still,
Whatso may change—shall I heal thee for this,
That thou mayst die more mad for her last kiss?"

She gazed at him with straining eyes; and he—
Despite himself love touched his dying heart
And from his eyes desire flashed suddenly,
And o'er his wan face the last blood did start
As with soft love his close-shut lips 'gan part.
She laughed out bitterly, and said: "Why then
Must I needs call thee falsest of all men,

"Seeing thou liest not to save thy life?—
Yet listen once again—fair is this place
That knew not the beginning of the strife,
And recks not of its end—and this my face,
This body thou wouldst day-long once embrace
And deem thyself right happy—thine it is,
Thine only, Paris, shouldst thou deem it bliss."

He looked into her eyes, and deemed he saw
A strange and awful look a-gathering there,
And sick scorn at her quivering fine lip draw;
Yet trembling he stretched out his hand to her,
Although self-loathing and strange hate did tear
His heart that Death made cold, e'en as he said:
"Whatso thou wilt shall be remembered;

"Whatso thou wilt, O love, shall be forgot—
It may be I shall love thee as of old."
As thunder laughs she laughed—"Nay touch me not!
Touch me not, fool!" she cried, "Thou grow'st a-cold,
And I am Death, Death, Death!—the tale is told
Of all thy days! of all those joyous days
When thinking naught of me thou garneredst praise.

"Turn back again, and think no more of me!
I am thy Death! woe for thy happy days!
For I must slay thee; ah, my misery!
Woe for the God-like wisdom thou wouldst praise!
Else I my love to life again might raise
A minute, ah, a minute! and be glad
While on my lips thy blessing lips I had?

"Would God that it were yesterday again;
Would God the red sun had died yester-eve,
And I were no more hapless now than then!
Would God that I could say, and not believe,
As yesterday, that years past hope did leave
My cold heart—that I lived a death in life—
Ah! then within my heart was yet a strife!

"But now, but now, is all come to an end—
Nay, speak not; think not of me! think of her
Who made me this; and back unto her wend,
Lest her lot, too, should be yet heavier!
I will depart for fear thou diest here,
Lest I should see thy woful ghost forlorn
Here wandering ever 'twixt the night and morn.

"—O heart grown wise, wilt thou not let me go?
Will ye be never satisfied, O eyes,
With gazing on my misery and my woe;
O foolish quivering heart, now grown so wise,
What folly is it that from out thee cries
To be all close to him once more, once more
Ere yet the dark stream cleaveth shore from shore?"

Her voice was a wail now, with quivering hand
At her white raiment did she clutch and tear
Unwitting, as she rose up and did stand
Bent over his wide eyes and pale face, where
No torturing hope was left, no pain, or fear;
For Death's cold rest was gathering fast on him,
And toward his heart crept over foot and limb.

A little while she stood, and spake no word,
But hung above him, with white heaving breast,
And moaning still as moans the gray-winged bird
In autumn-tide o'er his forgotten nest;
And then her hands about her throat she pressed,
As though to keep a cry back, then stooped down
And set her face to his, while spake her moan:

"O love, O cherished more than I can tell,
Through years of woe, O love, my life and bane,
My joy and grief, farewell, farewell, farewell!
Forgetfulness of grief I yet may gain;
In some wise may come ending to my pain;
It may be yet the Gods will have me glad!
Yet, love, I would that thee and pain I had!

"Alas! it may not be, it may not be,
The falling blossom of the late spring-tide,
Shall hang a golden globe upon the tree
When through the vale the mists of autumn glide:
Yet would, O Love, with thee I might abide.
Now, now that restful death is drawing nigh—
Farewell, farewell, how good it is to die!"

O strange, O strange, when on his lips once more
Her lips were laid! O strange that he must die
Now, when so clear a vision had come o'er
His failing heart, and keenest memory
Had shown him all his changing life passed by:
And what he was, and what he might have been,
Yea, and should be, perchance, so clear were seen!

Yea, then were all things laid within the scale,
Pleasure and lust, love and desire of fame,
Kindness, and hope, and folly—all the tale
Told in a moment, as across him came
That sudden flash, bright as the lightning-flame,
Showing the wanderer on the waste how he
Has gone astray 'mid dark and misery.

Ah, and her face upon his dying face
That the sun warmed no more! that agony
Of dying love, wild with the tale of days
Long past, and strange with hope that might not be—
All was gone now, and what least part had he
In Love at all, and why was life all gone?
Why must he meet the eyes of Death alone?

Digitized by Google

Alone, for she and ruth had left him there;
Alone, because the ending of the strife
He knew, well taught by death, drew surely near:
Alone, for all those years with pleasure rife
Should be a tale 'mid Helen's coming life,
And she and all the world should go its ways,
'Midst other troubles, other happy days.

And yet how was it with him? As if death
Strove yet with struggling life and love in vain,
With eyes grown deadly bright and rattling breath,
He raised himself, while wide his blood did stain
The linen fair, and seized the horn again,
And blew thereon a wild and shattering blast
Ere from his hand afar the thing he cast.

Then, as a man who in a failing fight
For a last onset gathers suddenly
All soul and strength, he faced the summer light,
And from his lips broke forth a mighty cry
Of "Helen, Helen, Helen!" yet the sky
Changed not above his cast-back golden head,
And merry was the world though he was dead.

But now when every echo was as still
As were the lips of Paris, once more came
The litter-bearers down the beech-clad hill
And stood about him crying out his name,
Lamenting for his beauty and his fame,
His love, his kindness, and his merry heart!
That still would thrust ill days and thoughts apart.

Homeward they bore him through the dark woods' gloom
With heavy hearts presaging nothing good,
And when they entered Troy again, a tomb
For them and theirs it seemed—Long has it stood,
But now indeed the labor and the blood,
The love, the patience, and good-heart are vain;
The Greeks may have what yet is left to gain.

I cannot tell what crop may clothe the hills,
The merry hills Troy whitened long ago,
Belike the sheaves, wherewith the reaper fills
His yellow wain, no whit the weaker grow
For that past harvest-tide of wrong and woe;
Belike the tale, wept over otherwhere,
Of those old days is clean forgotten there.

THE SON OF CRŒSUS.

ARGUMENT.

Crœsus, king of Lydia, dreamed that he saw his Son slain by an iron weapon, and though by every means he strove to avert this doom from him, yet thus it happened, for his Son was slain by the hand of the man who seemed least of all likely to do the deed.

Of Crœsus tells my tale, a king of old
In Lydia, ere the Mede fell on the land,
A man made mighty by great heaps of gold,
Feared for the myriads strong of heart and hand
That 'neath his banners wrought out his command,
And though his latter ending fell to ill,
Yet first of every joy he had his fill.

Two sons he had, and one was dumb from birth;
The other one, that Atys had to name,
Grew up a fair youth, and of might and worth,
And well it seemed the race wherefrom he came
From him should never get reproach or shame;
But yet no stroke he struck before his death,
In no war-shout he spent his latest breath.

Now Crœsus, lying on his bed a-night,
Dreamed that he saw this dear son lying low,
And folk lamenting he was slain outright,
And that some iron thing had dealt the blow;
By whose hand guided he could nowise know,
Or if in peace by traitors it were done,
Or in some open war not yet begun.

Three times one night this vision broke his sleep,
So that at last he rose up from his bed,
That he might ponder how he best might keep
The threatened danger from so dear a head;
And, since he now was old enough to wed,
The King sent men to search the lands around,
Until some matchless maiden should be found;

That in her arms this Atys might forget
The praise of men, and fame of history,
Whereby full many a field has been made wet
With blood of men, and many a deep-green sea
Been reddened therewithal, and yet shall be;
That her sweet voice might drown the people's praise,
Her eyes make bright the uneventful days.

So when at last a wonder they had bought,
From some sweet land down by the ocean's rim,
Than whom no fairer could by man be thought,
And ancient dames, scanning her limb by limb,
Had said that she was fair enough for him,
To her was Atys married with much show,
And looked to dwell with her in bliss enow.

And in meantime afield he never went,
Either to hunting or the frontier war,
No dart was cast, nor any engine bent
Anigh him, and the Lydian men afar
Must rein their steeds, and the bright blossoms mar,
If they have any lust of tourney now,
And in far meadows must they bend the bow.

And also through the palace everywhere
The swords and spears were taken from the wall
That long with honor had been hanging there,
And from the golden pillars of the hall;
Lest by mischance some sacred blade should fall,
And in its falling bring revenge at last
For many a fatal battle overpast.

And every day King Crœsus wrought with care
To save his dear son from that threatened end,
And many a beast he offered up with prayer
Unto the gods, and much of wealth did spend,
That they so prayed might yet perchance defend

Digitized by Google

That life, until at last that he were dead,
With earth laid heavy on his unseen head.

But in the midst even of the wedding feast
There came a man, who by the golden hall
Sat down upon the steps, and man or beast
He heeded not, but there against the wall
He leaned his head, speaking no word at all,
Till, with his son and son's wife, came the King,
And then unto his gown the man did cling.

"What man art thou?" the King said to him then,
"That in such guise thou prayest on thy knee;
Hast thou some fell foe here among my men?
Or hast thou done an ill deed unto me?
Or has thy wife been carried over sea?
Or hast thou on this day great need of gold?
Or say why else thou now art grown so bold."

"O King," he said, "I ask no gold to-day,
And though indeed thy greatness drew me here,
No wrong have I that thou couldst wipe away;
And naught of mine the pirate folk did bear
Across the sea; none of thy folk I fear:
But all the gods are now mine enemies,
Therefore I kneel before thee on my knees.

"For as with mine own brother on a day
Within the running-place at home I played,
Unwittingly I smote him in such way
That dead upon the green grass he was laid;
Half dead myself I fled away dismayed,
Wherefore I pray thee help me in my need,
And purify my soul of this sad deed.

"If of my name and country thou wouldst know,
In Phrygia yet my father is a king,
Gordius, the son of Midas, rich enow
In corn and cattle, golden cup and ring;
And mine own name before I did this thing
Was called Adrastus, whom, in street and hall,
The slayer of his brother men now call."

"Friend," said the King, "have thou no fear of me;
For though, indeed, I am right happy now,
Yet well I know this may not always be,
And I may chance some day to kneel full low,
And to some happy man mine head to bow
With prayers to do a greater thing than this,
Dwell thou with us and win again thy bliss.

"For in this city men in sport and play
Forget the trouble that the gods have sent;
Who therewithal send wine, and many a may
As fair as she for whom the Trojan went,
And many a dear delight besides have lent,
Which, whoso is well loved of them shall keep
Till in forgetful death he falls asleep.

"Therefore to-morrow shall those rites be done
That kindred blood demands that thou hast shed,
That if the mouth of thine own mother's son
Did hap to curse thee ere he was quite dead,
The curse may lie the lighter on thy head,
Because the flower-crowned head of many a beast
Has fallen voiceless in our glorious feast."

Then did Adrastus rise and thank the King,
And the next day when yet low was the sun,
The sacrifice and every other thing
That unto these dread rites belonged, was done;
And there Adrastus dwelt, hated of none,
And loved of many, and the King loved him,
For brave and wise he was and strong of limb.

But chiefly among all did Atys love
The luckless stranger, whose fair tales of war
The Lydian's heart abundantly did move,
And much they talked of wandering afar
Some day to lands where many marvels are,
With still the Phrygian through all things to be
The leader unto all felicity.

Now at this time folk came unto the King
Who on a forest's borders dwelling were,
Wherein there roamed full many a dangerous thing,
As wolf and wild bull, lion and brown bear;
But chiefly in that forest was the lair
Of a great boar that no man could withstand,
And many a woe he wrought upon the land.

Since long ago that men in Calydon
Held chase, no beast like him had once been seen;
He ruined vineyards lying in the sun;
After his harvesting the men must glean
What he had left, right glad they had not been
Among the tall stalks of the ripening wheat,
The fell destroyer's fatal tusks to meet.

For often would the lonely man entrapped
In vain from his dire fury strive to hide
In some thick hedge, and other whiles it happed
Some careless stranger by his place would ride,
And the tusks smote his fallen horse's side,
And what help then to such a wretch could come
With sword he could not draw, and far from home?

Or else girls, sent their water-jars to fill,
Would come back pale, too terrified to cry,
Because they had but seen him from the hill;
Or else again, with side rent wretchedly,
Some hapless damsel midst the brake would lie.
Shortly to say, there neither man nor maid
Was safe afield whether they wrought or played.

Therefore were come these dwellers by the wood
To pray the King brave men to them to send,
That they might live; and if he deemed it good,
That Atys with the other knights should wend,
They thought their grief the easier should have end;
For both by gods and men they knew him loved,
And easily by hope of glory moved.

"O Sire," they said, "thou know'st how Hercules
Was not content to wait till folk asked aid,
But sought the pests among their guarded trees;
Thou know'st what name the Theban Cadmus made,
And how the bull of Marathon was laid
Dead on the fallows of the Athenian land,
And how folk worshipped Atalanta's hand.

Digitized by Google

"Fair would thy son's name look upon the roll
Wherein such noble deeds as this are told;
And great delight shall surely fill thy soul,
Thinking upon his deeds when thou art old,
And thy brave heart is waxen faint and cold:
Dost thou not know, O King, how men will strive
That they, when dead, still in their sons may live?"

He shuddered as they spoke, because he thought,
Most certainly a winning tale is this
To draw him from the net where he is caught,
For hearts of men grow weary of all bliss;
Nor is he one to be content with his,
If he should hear the trumpet-blast of fame
And far-off people calling on his name.

"Good friends," he said, "go, get ye back again,
And doubt not I will send you men to slay
This pest ye fear; yet shall your prayer be vain
If ye with any other speak to-day;
And for my son, with me he needs must stay,
For mighty cares oppress the Lydian land.
Fear not, for ye shall have a noble band."

And with that promise must they be content,
And so departed, having feasted well.
And yet some god or other ere they went,
If they were silent, this their tale must tell
To more than one man; therefore it befell,
That at the last Prince Atys knew the thing,
And came with angry eyes unto the King.

"Father," he said, "since when am I grown vile?
Since when am I grown helpless of my hands?
Or else what folk, with words inwrought with guile,
Thine ears have poisoned; that when far-off lands
My fame might fill, by thy most strange commands
I needs must stay within this slothful home,
Whereto would God that I had never come?

"What! wilt thou take mine honor quite away?
Wouldst thou, that, as with her I just have wed
I sit among thy folk at end of day,
She should be ever turning round her head
To watch some man for war apparelled,
Because he wears a sword that he may use,
Which grace to me thou ever wilt refuse?

"Or dost thou think, when thou hast run thy race
And thou art gone, and in thy stead I reign,
The people will do honor to my place,
Or that the lords leal men will still remain,
If yet my father's sword be sharp in vain?
If on the wall his armor still hang up,
While for a spear I hold a drinking-cup?"

"O Son!" quoth Crœsus, "well I know thee brave,
And worthy of high deeds of chivalry;
Therefore the more thy dear life would I save,
Which now is threatened by the gods on high;
Three times one night I dreamed I saw thee die,
Slain by some deadly iron-pointed thing,
While weeping lords stood round thee in a ring."

Than loud laughed Atys, and he said again:
"Father, and did this ugly dream tell thee
What day it was on which I should be slain?
As may the gods grant I may one day be,
And not from sickness die right wretchedly,
Groaning with pain, my lords about my bed,
Wishing to God that I were fairly dead;

"But slain in battle, as the Lydian kings
Have died ere now, in some great victory,
While all about the Lydian shouting rings
Death to the beaten foemen as they fly.
What death but this, O father! should I die?
But if my life by iron shall be done,
What steel to-day shall glitter in the sun?

"Yea, father, if to thee it seemeth good
To keep me from the bright steel-bearing throng,
Let me be brave at least within the wood:
For surely, if thy dream be true, no wrong
Can hap to me from this beast's tushes strong:
Unless perchance the beast is grown so wise,
He haunts the forest clad in Lydian guise."

Then Crœsus said: "O Son, I love thee so,
That thou shalt do thy will upon this tide:
But since unto this hunting thou must go,
A trusty friend along with thee shall ride,
Who not for anything shall leave thy side.
I think, indeed, he loves thee well enow
To thrust his heart 'twixt thee and any blow.

"Go then, O Son, and if by some short span
Thy life be measured, how shall it harm thee,
If while life last thou art a happy man?
And thou art happy; only unto me
Is trembling left, and infelicity:
The trembling of the man who loves on earth,
But unto thee is hope and present mirth.

"Nay, be thou not ashamed, for on this day
I fear not much: thou read'st my dream aright,
No teeth or claws shall take thy life away.
And it may chance, ere thy last glorious fight,
I shall be blinded by the endless night;
And brave Adrastus on this day shall be
Thy safeguard, and shall give good heart to me.

"Go then, and send him hither, and depart;
And as the heroes did mayst thou too do,
Winning such fame as well may please thine heart."
With that word from the King did Atys go,
Who, left behind, sighed, saying, "May it be so,
Even as I hope; and yet I would to God
These men upon my threshold ne'er had trod."

So when Adrastus to the King was come
He said unto him: "O my Phrygian friend,
We in this land have given you a fair home,
And 'gainst all foes your life will we defend:
Wherefore for us that life thou shouldest spend,
If any day there should be need therefore;
And now a trusty friend I need right sore.

"Doubtless ere now thou hast heard many say
There is a doom that threatens my son's life;

Digitized by Google

Therefore this place is stripped of arms to-day,
And therefore still bides Atys with his wife,
And tempts not any god by raising strife;
Yet none the less by no desire of his,
To whom would war be most abundant bliss.

"And since to-day some glory he may gain
Against a monstrous bestial enemy,
And that the meaning of my dream is plain,
That saith that he by steel alone shall die,
His burning wish I may not well deny;
Therefore afield to-morrow doth he wend
And herein mayst thou show thyself my friend—

"For thou as captain of his band shalt ride,
And keep a watchful eye of everything,
Nor leave him whatsoever may betide:
Lo, thou art brave, the son of a great king,
And with thy praises doth this city ring;
Why should I tell thee what a name those gain,
Who, dying for their friends, die not in vain?"

Then said Adrastus: "Now were I grown base
Beyond all words, if I should spare for aught
In guarding him, so sit with smiling face,
And of this matter take no further thought,
Because with my life shall his life be bought,
If ill should hap; and no ill fate it were,
If I should die for what I hold so dear."

Then went Adrastus, and next morn all things,
That 'longed unto the hunting, were well dight,
And forth they went clad as the sons of kings;
Fair was the morn, as through the sunshine bright,
They rode, the prince half wild with great dight,
The Phrygian smiling on him soberly,
And ever looking round with watchful eye.

So through the city all the rout rode fast
With many a great black-muzzled yellow hound,
And then the teeming country-side they passed,
Until they came to sour and rugged ground,
And there rode up a little heathy mound,
That overlooked the scrubby woods and low,
That of the beast's lair somewhat they might know.

And there a good-man of the country-side
Showed them the places where he mostly lay;
And they, descending, through the wood did ride,
And followed on his tracks for half the day.
And at the last they brought him well to bay,
Within an oozy space amidst the wood,
About the which a ring of alders stood.

So when the hounds' changed voices clear they heard,
With hearts aflame on toward him straight they drew;
Atys the first of all, of naught afeard,
Except that folk should say some other slew
The beast; and lustily his horn he blew,
Going afoot; then, mighty spear in hand,
Adrastus headed all the following band.

Now when they came unto the plot of ground
Where stood the boar, hounds dead about him lay
Or sprawled about, bleeding from many a wound,
But still the others held him well at bay,
Nor had he been bestead thus ere that day.
But yet, seeing Atys, straight he rushed at him,
Speckled with foam, bleeding in flank and limb.

Then Atys stood and cast his well-steeled spear
With a great shout, and straight and well it flew;
For now the broad blade, cutting through the ear,
A stream of blood from out the shoulder drew.
And therewithal another, no less true,
Adrastus cast, whereby the boar had died:
But Atys drew the bright sword from his side,

And to the tottering beast he drew anigh:
But as the sun's rays ran adown the blade
Adrastus threw a javelin hastily,
For of the mighty beast was he afraid,
Lest by his wounds he should not yet be stayed,
But with a last rush cast his life away,
And dying there, the son of Crœsus slay.

But even as the feathered dart he hurled,
His trained, despairing eyes beheld the end,
And changed seemed all the fashion of the world,
And past and future into one did blend,
As he beheld the fixed eyes of his friend,
That no reproach had in them, and no fear,
For Death had seized him ere he thought him near.

Adrastus shrieked, and running up he caught
The falling man, and from his bleeding side
Drew out the dart, and, seeing that death had brought
Deliverance to him, he thereby had died;
But ere his hand the luckless steel could guide,
And he the refuge of poor souls could win,
The horror-stricken huntsmen had rushed in.

And these, with blows and cries he heeded naught,
His unresisting hands made haste to bind;
Then of the alder-boughs a bier they wrought,
And laid the corpse thereon, and 'gan to wind
Homeward amidst the tangled wood and blind,
And going slowly, at the eventide,
Some leagues from Sardis did that day abide.

Onward next morn the slaughtered man they bore,
With him that slew him, and at end of day
They reached the city, and with mourning sore
Toward the king's palace did they take their way.
He in an open western chamber lay
Feasting, though inwardly his heart did burn
Until that Atys should to him return.

And when those wails first smote upon his ear
He set the wine-cup down, and to his feet
He rose, and bitter all-consuming fear
Swallowed his joy, and nigh he went to meet
That which was coming through the weeping street:
But in the end he thought it good to wait,
And stood there doubting all the ills of fate.

But when at last up to that royal place
Folk brought the thing he once had held so dear,
Still stood the King, staring with ghastly face
As they brought forth Adrastus and the bier,
But spoke at last slowly without a tear,

Digitized by Google

"O Phrygian man, that I did purify,
Is it through thee that Atys came to die?"

"O King," Adrastus said, "take now my life,
With whatso torment seemeth good to thee,
As my word went, for I would end this strife,
And underneath the earth lie quietly;
Nor is it my will here alive to be:
For as my brother, so Prince Atys died,
And this unlucky hand some god did guide."

Then as a man constrained, the tale he told
From end to end, nor spared himself one whit:
And as he spoke, the wood did still behold,
The trodden grass, and Atys dead on it;
And many a change o'er the King's face did flit
Of kingly rage and hatred and despair,
As on the slayer's face he still did stare.

At last he said: "Thy death avails me naught,
The gods themselves have done this bitter deed,
That I was all too happy was their thought,
Therefore thy heart is dead and mine doth bleed,
And I am helpless as a trodden weed;
Thou art but as the handle of the spear,
The caster sits far off from any fear.

"Yet, if thy hurt they meant, I can do this—
—Loose him and let him go in peace from me—
I will not slay the slayer of all my bliss,
Yet go, poor man, for when thy face I see
I curse the gods for their felicity.
Surely some other slayer they would have found,
If thou hadst long ago been under ground.

"Alas, Adrastus! in my inmost heart
I knew the gods would one day do this thing,
But deemed indeed that it would be thy part
To comfort me amidst my sorrowing;
Make haste to go, for I am still a king!
Madness may take me, I have many hands
Who will not spare to do my worst commands."

With that Adrastus' bonds were done away,
And forthwith to the city gates he ran,
And on the road where they had been that day
Rushed through the gathering night; and some lone man
Beheld next day his visage wild and wan,
Peering from out a thicket of the wood
Where he had spilt that well-belovèd blood.

And now the day of burial pomp must be,
And to those rites all lords of Lydia came
About the King, and that day they and he
Cast royal gifts of rich things on the flame;
But while they stood and wept, and called by name
Upon the dead, amidst them came a man
With raiment rent, and haggard face and wan;

Who, when the marshals would have thrust him out
And men looked strange on him, began to say:
"Surely the world is changed since ye have doubt
Of who I am; nay, turn me not away,
For ye have called me princely ere to-day—
Adrastus, son of Gordius, a great King,
Whereunto Pallas Phrygian maidens sing.

"O Lydians, many a rich thing have ye cast
Into this flame, but I myself will give
A greater gift, since now I see at last
The gods are wearied for that still I live,
And with their will why should I longer strive?
Atys, O Atys, thus I give to thee
A life that lived for thy felicity."

And therewith from his side a knife he drew,
And, crying out, upon the pile he leapt,
And with one mighty stroke himself he slew.
So there these princes both together slept,
And their light ashes, gathered up, were kept
Within a golden vessel wrought all o'er
With histories of this hunting of the boar.

THE DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE.

But, knowing now that they would have her speak,
She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,
Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,

As though she had had there a shameful blow,
And feeling it shameful to feel aught but shame
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,

She must a little touch it; like one lame
She walked away from Gauwaine, with her head
Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame

The tears dried quick; she stopped at last and said:
"O knights and lords, it seems but little skill
To talk of well-known things past now and dead.

"God wot I ought to say, I have done ill,
And pray you all forgiveness heartily!
Because you must be right such great lords—still

"Listen, suppose your time were come to die
And you were quite alone and very weak;
Yea, laid a dying while very mightily

"The wind was ruffling up the narrow streak
Of river through your broad lands running well:
Suppose a hush should come, then some one speak:

"'One of these cloths is heaven, and one is hell,
Now choose one cloth forever, which they be,
I will not tell you, you must somehow tell

"'Of your own strength and mightiness; here, see!'
Yea, yea, my lord, and you to ope your eyes,
At foot of your familiar bed to see

"A great God's angel standing, with such dyes,
Not known on earth, on his great wings, and hands,
Held out two ways, light from the inner skies

"Showing him well, and making his commands
Seem to be God's commands; moreover, too,
Holding within his hands the cloths on wands;

Digitized by Google

"And one of these strange choosing cloths was blue,
Wavy and long, and one cut short and red;
No man could tell the better of the two

"After a shivering half-hour you said,
'God help! heaven's color, the blue;' and he said, 'hell.'
Perhaps you then would roll upon your bed,

"And cry to all good men that loved you well,
'Ah Christ! if only I had known, known, known;'
Launcelot went away, then I could tell,

"Like wisest man how all things would be, moan,
And roll and hurt myself, and long to die,
And yet fear much to die for what was sown.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
Whatever may have happened through these years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie."

Her voice was low at first, being full of tears,
But as it cleared, it grew full loud and shrill,
Growing a windy shriek in all men's ears,

A ringing in their startled brains, until
She said that Gauwaine lied, then her voice sunk,
And her great eyes began again to fill,

Though still she stood right up, and never shrunk,
But spoke on bravely, glorious lady fair!
Whatever tears her full lips may have drunk,

She stood, and seemed to think, and wrung her hair,
Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame,
With passionate twisting of her body there:

"It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came,
To dwell at Arthur's court: at Christmas-time
This happened; when the heralds sung his name,

"'Son of King Ban of Benwick,' seemed to chime
Along with all the bells that rang that day,
O'er the white roofs, with little change of rhyme.

"Christmas and whitened winter passed away,
And over me the April sunshine came,
Made very awful with black hail-clouds, yea

"And in summer I grew white with flame,
And bowed my head down—autumn, and the sick
Sure knowledge things would never be the same,

"However often spring might be most thick
Of blossoms and buds, smote on me and I grew
Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,

"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through
My eager body; while I laughed out loud,
And let my lips curl up at false or true,

"Seemed cold and shallow, without any cloud.
Behold my judges, then the cloths were brought:
While I was dizzied thus, old thoughts would crowd,

"Belonging to the time ere I was bought
By Arthur's great name and his little love,
Must I give up forever then, I thought,

"That which I deemed would ever round me move
Glorifying all things; for a little word,
Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove

"Stone-cold forever? Pray you, does the Lord
Will that all folks should be quite happy and good?
I love God now a little, if this cord

"Were broken, once for all what striving could
Make me love anything in earth or heaven.
So day by day it grew, as if one should

"Slip slowly down some path worn smooth and even,
Down to a cool sea on a summer day;
Yet still in slipping was there some small leaven

"Of stretched hands catching small stones by the way,
Until one surely reached the sea at last,
And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay

"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea all past
Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips,
Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'ercast

"In the lone sea, far off from any ships!
Do I not know now of a day in spring?
No minute of that wild day ever slips

"From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,
And wheresoever I may be, straightway
Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting;

"I was half mad with beauty on that day,
And went without my ladies all alone,
In a quiet garden walled round every way;

"I was right joyful of that wall of stone,
That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky,
And trebled all the beauty: to the bone,

"Yea, right through to my heart, grown very shy
With weary thoughts, it pierced, and made me glad;
Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,

"A little thing just then had made me mad;
I dared not think, as I was wont to do,
Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had

"Held out my long hand up against the blue,
And, looking on the tenderly darkened fingers,
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,

Digitized by Google

"There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers,
Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

"And startling green drawn upward by the sun?
But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair,
And trancedly stood watching the west wind run

"With faintest half-heard breathing sound—why there
I lose my head e'en now in doing this;
But shortly listen—In that garden fair

"Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring day,
I scarce dare talk of the remembered bliss,

"When both our mouths went wandering in one way,
And aching sorely, met among the leaves;
Our hands being left behind strained far away.

"Never within a yard of my bright sleeves
Had Launcelot come before—and now, so nigh!
After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
Whatever happened on through all those years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.

"Being such a lady could I weep these tears
If this were true? A great queen such as I
Having sinned this way, straight her conscience sears;

"And afterward she liveth hatefully,
Slaying and poisoning, certes never weeps—
Gauwaine, be friends now, speak me lovingly.

"Do I not see how God's dear pity creeps
All through your frame, and trembles in your mouth?
Remember in what grave your mother sleeps,

"Buried in some place far down in the south,
Men are forgetting as I speak to you;
By her head severed in that awful drouth

"Of pity that drew Agravaine's fell blow,
I pray your pity! let me not scream out
For ever after, when the shrill winds blow

"Through half your castle-locks! let me not shout
For ever after, when the winter night
When you ride out alone! in battle-rout

"Let not my rusting tears make your sword light!
Ah! God of mercy how he turns away!
So, ever must I dress me to the fight,

"So—let God's justice work! Gauwaine, I say,
See me hew down your proofs: yea, all men know
Even as you said how Mellyagraunce one day,

"One bitter day in *la Fausse Garde*, for so
All good knights held it after, saw—
Yea, sirs, by cursed unknightly outrage; though

"You, Gauwaine, held his word without a flaw,
This Mellyagraunce saw blood upon my bed—
Whose blood then pray you? is there any law

"To make a queen say why some spots of red
Lie on her coverlet? or will you say,
'Your hands are white, lady, as when you wed,

"'Where did you bleed?' and must I stammer out—'Nay,
I blush indeed, fair lord, only to rend
My sleeve up to my shoulder, where there lay

"'A knife-point last night:' so must I defend
The honor of the lady Guenevere?
Not so, fair lords, even if the world should end

"This very day, and you were judges here
Instead of God. Did you see Mellyagraunce
When Launcelot stood by him? what white fear

"Curdled his blood, and how his teeth did dance,
His side sink in? as my knight cried and said,
'Slayer of unarmed men, here is a chance!

"'Setter of traps, I pray you guard your head,
By God I am so glad to fight with you,
Stripper of ladies, that my hand feels lead

"'For driving weight; hurrah now! draw and do,
For all my wounds are moving in my breast,
And I am getting mad with waiting so.'

"He struck his hands together o'er the beast,
Who fell down flat and grovelled at his feet,
And groaned at being slain so young—'at least.'

"My knight said, 'Rise you sir, who are so fleet
At catching ladies, half-armed will I fight,
My left side all uncovered!' then I weet,

"Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great delight
Upon his knave's face; not until just then
Did I quite hate him, as I saw my knight

"Along the lists look to my stake and pen
With such a joyous smile, it made me sigh
From agony beneath my waist-chain, when

"The fight began, and to me they drew nigh;
Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right,
And traversed warily, and ever high

"And fast leaped caitift's sword, until my knight
Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand,
Caught it, and swung it; that was all the fight.

"Except a spout of blood on the hot land;
For it was hottest summer; and I know
I wondered how the fire, while I should stand,

"And burn, against the heat, would quiver so,
Yards above my head; thus these matters went:
Which things were only warnings of the woe

Digitized by Google

"That fell on me. Yet Mellyagraunce was shent,
For Mellyagraunce had fought against the Lord;
Therefore, my lords, take heed lest you be blent

"With all this wickedness; say no rash word
Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes,
Wept all away the gray, may bring some sword

"To drown you in your blood; see my breast rise,
Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand;
And how my arms are moved in wonderful wise,

"Yea also at my full heart's strong command,
See through my long throat how the words go up
In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand

"The shadow lies like wine within a cup
Of marvellously colored gold; yea now
This little wind is rising, look you up,

"And wonder how the light is falling so
Within my moving tresses: will you dare,
When you have looked a little on my brow,

"To say this thing is vile? or will you care
For any plausible lies of cunning woof,
When you can see my face with no lie there

"Forever? am I not a gracious proof—
'But in your chamber Launcelot was found'—
Is there a good knight then would stand aloof,

"When a queen says with gentle queenly sound:
'O true as steel come now and talk with me,
I love to see your step upon the ground

"'Unwavering, also well I love to see
That gracious smile light up your face, and hear
Your wonderful words, that all mean verily

"'The thing they seem to mean: good friend, so dear
To me in everything, come here to-night,
Or else the hours will pass most dull and drear;

"'If you come not, I fear this time I might
Get thinking over much of times gone by,
When I was young, and green hope was in sight:

"'For no man cares now to know why I sigh;
And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs,
Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie

"'So thick in the gardens; therefore one so longs
To see you, Launcelot; that we may be
Like children once again, free from all wrongs

"'Just for one night.' Did he not come to me?
What thing could keep true Launcelot away
If I said 'come?' there was one less than three

"In my quiet room that night, and we were gay,
Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick,
Because a bawling broke our dream up, yea,

"I looked at Launcelot's face and could not speak,
For he looked helpless too, for a little while;
Then I remember how I tried to shriek,

"And could not, but fell down; from tile to tile
The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head
And made me dizzier; till within a while

"My maids were all about me, and my head
On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away
From its white chattering, until Launcelot said—

"By God! I will not tell you more to-day,
Judge any way you will—what matters it?
You know quite well the story of that fray,

"How Launcelot stilled their bawling, the mad fit
That caught up Gauwaine—all, all, verily,
But just that which would save me; these things flit.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
Whatever may have happened these long years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!

"All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears."
She would not speak another word, but stood
Turned sideways; listening, like a man who hears

His brother's trumpet sounding through the wood
Of his foes' lances. She leaned eagerly,
And gave a slight spring sometimes, as she could

At last hear something really; joyfully
Her cheek grew crimson, as the headlong speed
Of the roan charger drew all men to see,
The knight who came was Launcelot at good need.

SUMMER DAWN.

PRAY but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer night waneth, the morning light slips,
Faint and gray 'twixt the leaves of the aspen, betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:
Patient and colorless, though heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun:
Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
Speak but one word to me over the corn,
Over the tender, bowed locks of the corn.

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM S. GILBERT.

WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT was born in London, November 18, 1836. He was educated at Great Ealing School, and took the bachelor's degree at the University of London. He was clerk in the Privy Council office from 1857 till 1862, was called to the bar in 1864, and in 1868 became a captain of militia. His first play, "Dulcamara," was put upon the stage in London in 1866. His other plays include: "An Old Score," "The Princess" (based on Tennyson's poem), "Ages Ago," "Randall's Thumb," "Creatures of Impulse," "A Sensation Novel," "Happy Arcadia," "The Palace of Truth," "Pygmalion and Galatea," "The Wicked World" (the last three being fairy comedies), "Charity," and "Sweethearts." A volume of his plays was published in 1876. His "Bab Ballads," from which the following selections are made, were originally contributed to London *Fun*, and are published in two volumes.

FERDINANDO AND ELVIRA.

PART I.

AT a pleasant evening party I had taken down to supper
One whom I will call Elvira, and we talked of love and Tupper.

Mr. Tupper and the poets, very lightly with them dealing,
For I've always been distinguished for a strong poetic feeling.

Then we let off paper crackers, each of which contained a motto,
And she listened while I read them, till her mother told her not to.

Then she whispered, "To the ball-room we had better, dear, be walking;
If we stop down here much longer, really people will be talking."

There were noblemen in coronets, and military cousins,
There were captains by the hundred, there were baronets by dozens.

Yet she heeded not their offers, but dismissed them with a blessing;
Then she let down all her back-hair which had taken long in dressing.

Then she had convulsive sobbings in her agitated throttle,
Then she wiped her pretty eyes and smelt her pretty smelling-bottle.

So I whispered, "Dear Elvira, say—what can the matter be with you?
Does anything you've eaten, darling Popsy, disagree with you?"

But spite of all I said, her sobs grew more and more distressing,
And she tore her pretty back-hair, which had taken long in dressing.

Then she gazed upon the carpet, at the ceiling then above me,
And she whispered, "Ferdinando, do you really, *really* love me?"

"Love you?" said I, then I sighed, and then I gazed upon her sweetly—
For I think I do this sort of thing particularly neatly—

"Send me to the Arctic regions, or illimitable azure,
On a scientific goose-chase, with my Coxwell or my Glaisher!

"Tell me whither I may hie me, tell me, dear one, that I may know—
Is it up the highest Andes? down a horrible volcano?"

But she said, "It is n't polar bears, or hot volcanic grottoes,
Only find out who it is that writes those lovely cracker mottoes!"

PART II.

"Tell me, Henry Wadsworth, Alfred, Poet Close, or Mister Tupper,
Do you write the bonbon mottoes my Elvira pulls at supper?"

But Henry Wadsworth smiled, and said he had not had that honor:
And Alfred, too, disclaimed the words that told so much upon her.

"Mister Martin Tupper, Poet Close, I beg of you inform us;"
But my question seemed to throw them both into a rage enormous.

Digitized by Google

Mister Close expressed a wish that he could only get anigh to me.
And Mister Martin Tupper sent the following reply to me:

"A fool is bent upon a twig, but wise men dread a bandit,"
Which I know was very clever; but I didn't understand it.

Seven weary years I wandered—Patagonia, China, Norway,
Till at last I sank exhausted at a pastrycook his doorway.

There were fuchsias and geraniums, and daffodils and myrtle,
So I entered, and I ordered half a basin of mock turtle.

He was plump and he was chubby, he was smooth and he was rosy,
And his little wife was pretty, and particularly cozy.

And he chirped and sang, and skipped about, and laughed with laughter hearty—
He was wonderfully active for so very stout a party.

And I said, "O gentle pieman, why so very, very merry?
Is it purity of conscience, or your one-and-seven sherry?"

But he answered, "I'm so happy—no profession could be dearer—
If I am not humming 'Tra! la! la!' I'm singing 'Tirer, lirer!'

"First I go and make the patties, and the puddings and the jellies,
Then I make a sugar bird-cage, which upon a table swell is;

"Then I polish all the silver, which a supper-table lacquers;
Then I write the pretty mottoes which you find inside the crackers—"

"Found at last!" I madly shouted. "Gentle pieman, you astound me!"
Then I waved the turtle-soup enthusiastically round me!

And I shouted and I danced until he'd quite a crowd around him—
And I rushed away, exclaiming, "I have found him! I have found him!"

And I heard the gentle pieman in the road behind me trilling,
"'Tira! lira!' stop him, stop him! 'Tra! la! la!' the soup's a shilling!"

But until I reached Elvira's home, I never, never waited,
And Elvira to her Ferdinand's irrevocably mated!

THE FOLLY OF BROWN.

I KNEW a boor—a clownish card,
(His only friends were pigs and cows and
The poultry of a small farmyard)
Who came into two hundred thousand.

Good fortune worked no change in Brown,
Though she's a mighty social chymist:
He was a clown—and by a clown
I do not mean a pantomimist.

It left him quiet, calm, and cool,
Though hardly knowing what a crown was—
You can't imagine what a fool
Poor rich, uneducated Brown was!

He scouted all who wished to come
And give him monetary schooling:
And I propose to give you some
Idea of his insensate fooling.

I formed a company or two—
(Of course I don't know what the rest meant,
I formed them solely with a view
To help him to a sound investment).

Their objects were—their only cares—
To justify their Boards in showing
A handsome dividend on shares,
And keep their good promoter going.

But no—the lout prefers his brass,
Though shares at par I freely proffer:
Yes—will it be believed?—the ass
Declines, with thanks, my well-meant offer!

He added, with a bumpkin's grin,
(A weakly intellect denoting)
He'd rather not invest it in
A company of my promoting!

"You have two hundred 'thou' or more,"
Said I. "You'll waste it, lose it, lend it:
Come, take my furnished second floor,
I'll gladly show you how to spend it."

But will it be believed that he,
With grin upon his face of poppy,
Declined my aid, while thanking me
For what he called my "philanthroppy?"

Some blind, suspicious fools rejoice
In doubting friends who would n't harm them;
They will not hear the charmer's voice,
However wisely he may charm them.

I showed him that his coat, all dust,
Top boots and cords provoked compassion,
And proved that men of station must
Conform to the decrees of fashion.

I showed him where to buy his hat,
To coat him, trouser him, and boot him;
But no—he would n't hear of that,
"He did n't think the style would suit him!"

I offered him a county-seat,
And made no end of an oration;

Digitized by Google

I made it certainly complete,
And introduced the deputation.

But no—the clown my prospects blights—
(The worth of birth it surely teaches!)
"Why should I want to spend my nights
In Parliament, a-making speeches?

"I have n't never been to school—
I ain't had not no eddication—
And I should surely be a fool
To publish that to all the nation!"

I offered him a trotting horse—
No hack had ever trotted faster—
I also offered him, of course,
A rare and curious "old Master."

I offered to procure him weeds—
Wines fit for one in his position—
But, though an ass in all his deeds,
He 'd learned the meaning of "commission."

He called me "thief" the other day,
And daily from his door he thrusts me;
Much more of this, and soon I may
Begin to think that Brown mistrusts me.

So deaf to all sound Reason's rule
This poor uneducated clown is,
You can*not* fancy what a fool
Poor rich, uneducated Brown is.

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL."

'T WAS on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone, on a piece of stone,
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid;
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been [drinking,
And so I simply said:

"O elderly man, it's little I know,
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
How you can possibly be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn:

"'T was in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all o' the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster-roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we 'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So, we drawed a lot, and, accordin', shot
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, 'Which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me;
But we 'd both be blowed if we 'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

"'I 'll be eat if you dines off me,' says Tom,
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you 'll be,'
'I 'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I,
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
While I can—and will—cook *you!*'

"So, he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shalot,
And some sage and parsley too.

"'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
'T will soothing be if I let you see,
How extremely nice you 'll smell!'

"And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less,
And—as I eating be

Digitized by Google

The last of his chops, why I almost drops,
For a wessel in sight I see.

"And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But I sit and croak, and a single joke
I have—which is to say:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig!"

KING BORRIA BUNGALEE BOO.

King Borria Bungalee Boo
Was a man-eating African swell;
His sigh was a hullaballoo,
His whisper a horrible yell—
A horrible, horrible yell!

Four subjects, and all of them male,
To Borria doubled the knee,
They were once on a far larger scale,
But he 'd eaten the balance, you see
("Scale" and "balance" is punning, you see).

There was haughty Pish-Tush-Pooh-Bah,
There was lumbering Doodle-Dum-Deh,
Despairing Alack-a-Dey-Ah,
And Good little Tootle-Tum-Teh—
Exemplary Tootle-Tum-Teh.

One day there was grief in the crew,
For they had n't a morsel of meat,
And Borria Bungalee Boo
Was dying for something to eat—
"Come, provide me with something to eat!"

"Alack-a-Dey, famished I feel;
Oh, good little Tootle-Tum-Teh,
Where on earth shall I look for a meal?
For I have n't no dinner to-day!
Not a morsel of dinner to-day!

"Dear Tootle-Tum, what shall we do?
Come, get us a meal, or in truth,
If you don't we shall have to eat you,
Oh, adorable friend of our youth!
Thou beloved little friend of our youth."

And he answered, "O Bungalee Boo,
For a moment I hope you will wait—
Tippy-Wippity Tol-the-Rol-Loo
Is the queen of a neighboring state—
A remarkably neighboring state.

"Tippy-Wippity Tol-the-Rol-Loo,
She would pickle deliciously cold—
And her four pretty Amazons, too,
Are enticing, and not very old—
Twenty-seven is not very old.

"There is neat little Titty-Fol-Leh,
There is rollicking Tral-the-Ral-Lah,
There is jocular Waggety-Weh,
There is musical Doh-Reh-Mi-Fah—
There 's the nightingale Doh-Reh-Mi-Fah!"

So the forces of Bungalee Boo
Marched forth in a terrible row,
And the ladies who fought for Queen Loo
Prepared to encounter the foe—
This dreadful insatiate foe!

But they sharpened no weapons at all,
And they poisoned no arrows—not they!
They made ready to conquer or fall
In a totally different way,
An entirely different way.

With a crimson and pearly-white dye
They endeavored to make themselves fair,
With black they encircled each eye,
And with yellow they painted their hair
(It was wool, but they thought it was hair).

And the forces they met in the field:
And the men of King Borria said,
"Amazonians, immediately yield!"
And their arrows they drew to the head,
Yes, drew them right up to the head.

But jocular Waggety-Weh
Ogled Doodle-Dum-Dey (which was wrong),
And neat little Titty-Fol-Leh
Said, "Tootle-Tum, you go along!
You naughty old dear, go along!"

And rollicking Tral-the-Ral-Lah
Tapped Alack-a-Dey-Ah with her fan;
And musical Doh-Reh-Mi-Fah
Said, "Pish, go away, you bad man!
Go away, you delightful young man!"

And the Amazons simpered and sighed,
And they ogled, and giggled, and flushed,
And they opened their pretty eyes wide,
And they chuckled, and flirted, and blushed
(At least, if they could, they 'd have blushed).

But haughty Pish-Tush-Pooh-Bah
Said, "Alack-a-Dey, what does this mean?"
And despairing Alack-a-Dey-Ah
Said, "They think us uncommonly green—
Ha! ha! most uncommonly green!"

Even blundering Doodle-Dum-Dey
Was insensible quite to their leers,
And said good little Tootle-Tum-Tey,
"It 's your blood we desire, pretty dears—
We have come for our dinners, my dears!"

And the Queen of the Amazons fell
To Borria Bungalee Boo,
In a mouthful he gulped, with a yell,
Tippy-Wippity Tol-the-Rol-Loo—
The pretty Queen Tol-the-Rol-Loo.

And neat little Titty-Fol-Leh
Was eaten by Pish-Tush-Pooh-Bah,
And light-hearted Waggety-Weh
By dismal Alack-a-Dey-Ah—
Despairing Alack-a-Dey-Ah.

And rollicking Tral-the-Ral-Lah
Was eaten by Doodle-Dum-Dey,
And musical Doh-Reh-Mi-Fah
By good little Tootle-Tum-Tey—
Exemplary Tootle-Tum-Tey!

Digitized by Google

ISA CRAIG KNOX.

Isa Craig was born in Edinburgh, in 1836. Her father was a merchant. At an early age she contributed verses to the *Scotsman* newspaper, and in 1856 she published "Poems by Isa." Soon after this she was appointed assistant secretary of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science. In January, 1859, her "Ode on the Centenary of Burns" gained the prize of £50 offered by the directors of the Crystal Palace Company, for which there were more than 600 competitors. In 1865 she published "Duchess Agnes, and other Poems;" in 1873, "Tales on the Parables;" and in 1874, "Songs of Consolation." In 1866 she married her cousin, John Knox, a London merchant, and has since resided at New Cross, Kent.

ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF BURNS.

We hail this morn,
A century's noblest birth;
A Poet peasant-born,
Who more of Fame's immortal dower
Unto his country brings
Than all her kings!

As lamps high set
Upon some earthly eminence;
And to the gazer brighter thence
Than the sphere lights they flout—
Dwindle in distance and die out,
While no star waneth yet;
So through the past's far-reaching night
Only the star-souls keep their light.

A gentle boy,
With moods of sadness and of mirth,
Quick tears and sudden joy,
Grew up beside the peasant's hearth.
His father's toil he shares;
But half his mother's cares
From his dark, searching eyes,
Too swift to sympathize,
Hid in her heart she bears.

At early morn
His father calls him to the field;
Through the stiff soil that clogs his feet,
Chill rain, and harvest heat,
He plods all day; returns at eve outworn,
To the rude fare a peasant's lot doth yield—
To what else was he born?

The God-made king
Of every living thing;
(For his great heart in love could hold them all);
The dumb eyes meeting his by hearth and stall—
Gifted to understand!—
Knew it and sought his hand;
And the most timorous creature had not fled
Could she his heart have read,
Which fain all feeble things had blessed and sheltered.

To Nature's feast,
Who knew her noblest guest
And entertained him best,
Kingly he came. Her chambers of the east
She draped with crimson and with gold,
And poured her pure joy wines
For him the poet-souled;
For him her anthem rolled
From the storm-wind among the winter pines,
Down to the slenderest note
Of a love-warble from the linnet's throat.

But when begins
The array for battle, and the trumpet blows,
A king must leave the feast and lead the fight;
And with its mortal foes,
Grim gathering hosts of sorrows and of sins,
Each human soul must close;
And Fame her trumpet blew
Before him, wrapped him in her purple state,
And made him mark for all the shafts of Fate
That henceforth round him flew.

Though he may yield,
Hard-pressed, and wounded fall
Forsaken on the field;
His regal vestments soiled;
His crown of half its jewels spoiled;
He is a king for all.
Had he but stood aloof!
Had he arrayed himself in armor proof
Against temptation's darts!
So yearn the good—so those the world calls wise,
With vain, presumptuous hearts,
Triumphant moralize.

Of martyr-woe
A sacred shadow on his memory rests—
Tears have not ceased to flow—
Indignant grief yet stirs impetuous breasts,
To think—above that noble soul brought low,
That wise and soaring spirit fooled, enslaved—
Thus, thus he had been saved!

It might not be!
That heart of harmony
Had been too rudely rent;
Its silver chords, which any hand could wound,
By no hand could be tuned,
Save by the Maker of the instrument,

Digitized by Google

Its every string who knew,
And from profaning touch his heavenly gift
withdrew.

Regretful love
His country fain would prove,
By grateful honors lavished on his grave;
Would fain redeem her blame
That he so little at her hands can claim,
Who unrewarded gave
To her his life-bought gift of song and fame.

The land he trod
Hath now become a place of pilgrimage;
Where dearer are the daisies of the sod
That could his song engage.
The hoary hawthorn, wreathed
Above the bank on which his limbs he flung
While some sweet plaint he breathed;
The streams he wandered near;
The maidens whom he loved; the songs he sung—
All, all are dear!

The arch blue eyes—
Arch but for love's disguise—
Of Scotland's daughters, soften at his strain;
Her hardy sons, sent forth across the main
To drive the ploughshare through earth's virgin
soils,
Lighten with it their toils:
And sister-lands have learned to love the tongue
In which such songs are sung.

For doth not song
To the whole world belong?
Is it not given wherever tears can fall,
Wherever hearts can melt, of blushes glow,
Or mirth and sadness mingle as they flow,
A heritage to all?

A REMEMBRANCE.

In a garden we were sitting,
Three, whose hearts were one,
And before us leaves were flitting,
Golden in the sun.

And around us birds were singing—
All things smiled and glowed;
Music in our hearts was ringing,
Speech like music flowed.

But as we were converse holding
Of all happy things,
All the birds their wings were folding,
And the time had wings.

Rosy clouds in swift transition
Faded into grey,
Then we wished some old magician
Would bid Time to stay.

Or that such had come and found us
But an hour agone,
And in fabled spell had bound us,
To be loosed by none!

Thus forever, all unwitting
How the ages flew,
Golden leaves before us flitting,
Sunshine streaming through!

Thus forever! Thus forever!
Ah! the thought how vain!
Mournful, too, for we shall never
Be the same again.

All our brows have gathered sadness,
Travelling sore of foot;
On our lips the songs of gladness
Now are almost mute.

Could some great magician aid us
By once famous magic might,
Would we give what time has made us
For that old and dear delight?

Would we three again were sitting
As when life was new,
Golden leaves before us flitting,
Sunshine streaming through!

AFTER WAR.

He came when the war was ended,
From camp and battle-field,
Home, to be gently tended,
His heavy wound half-healed.
After the joy of meeting
With its mingled pain had passed,
Peace, with a holy greeting,
Kissed all our lips at last.

But when on her stay we reckoned,
A sad farewell she breathed,
And rose and softly beckoned
To him whose sword was sheathed.
He laid him down meek-hearted,
We filled his breast with flowers;
Our hero had departed,
To a surer peace than ours.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

He came from fasting in the wild,
He made them glad with wine;
Amid the marriage mirth he smiled,
And gave a gift divine.

Upon the water coldly urned
He looked, to blood of vine
It blushed and glowed and swiftly turned,
Beneath his smile divine.

Not more is here than Nature yields:
The rain, the sweet sunshine,
Make miracles in all the fields,
And, Lord, the power is thine!

Life's blessings free as water flow
From the same source divine—
Bid Jesus to the feast, and lo!
He makes the water wine.

Digitized by Google

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

Algernon Charles Swinburne was born in London, April 5, 1837, and is the son of Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne. At the age of twenty he entered Balliol College, Oxford, but did not take a degree. He published two plays, "The Queen Mother" and "Rosamond," in 1860; a tragedy in the Greek form, "Atalanta in Calydon," in 1864; "Chastelard," a tragedy, in 1865; and "Poems and Ballads," republished in New York under the title "Laus Veneris," in 1866. The last-named volume subjected him to very severe criticism for its uncleanness, and was soon suppressed by his publisher. It contains the best and the worst of his minor poems. He has since published: "Notes on Poems and Reviews," a reply to his critics, 1866; "A Song of Italy," 1867; "William Blake, a Critical Essay," 1868; "Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition," with W. M. Rossetti, 1868; "Siena, a Poem," 1868; "Ode on the Proclamation of the French Republic," 1870; "Bothwell, a Tragedy," 1870; "Songs before Sunrise," 1871; "Essays and Studies," 1875; "George Chapman, a Critical Essay," 1875; and "Erectheus," a play in Greek form, 1875. He has edited Coleridge's poems (1869) and the dramatic works of Chapman (1875).

Swinburne's first volume was not especially successful; but with his "Atalanta" and his "Poems and Ballads" he challenged the attention of the poetry-loving public, not so much by the questionable morality of many passages, which, however, was largely discussed, as by the heretofore untouched musical capacities which he seemed to have discovered in our mother-tongue. Swinburne is probably the best versifier that ever lived; certainly no one has yet equalled him in making melodious the mere recital of English words. Aside from this peculiar gift, he cannot be ranked very high as a poet; indeed, he seems already to have exhausted the stock of poetical ideas with which he burst upon us ten years ago. In those ten years he has written altogether too much—a fault which he shares with most of his contemporary poets.

Swinburne comes of an ancient Catholic family, and was brought up in that faith; but what his religious belief is now, it would be hard to say. Wild stories have been told of his eccentricities—social, religious, and literary—undoubtedly containing a certain amount of truth, whose exact bounds it is perhaps hardly worth while to attempt to trace. He resides at Holmwood, Henley-on-Thames, and seems to have settled down to hard study and regular literary work, only running up to London now and then for a few days with his friends Morris and the Rossettis.

A MATCH.

If love were what the rose is,
  And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together,
Through sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
  Green pleasure or gray grief—
If love were what the rose is,
  And I were like the leaf.

If love were what the words are,
  And I were like the tune,
With double sound, and single
Delight, our lips would mingle
With kisses glad as birds are
  That get sweet rain at noon—
If love were what the words are,
  And I were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
  And I, your love, were death,
We 'd shine and snow together,
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
  And hours of fruitful breath—
If you were life, my darling,
  And I, your love, were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
  And I were page to joy,
We 'd play for lives and seasons,
With loving looks, and treasons,
And tears of night and morrow,
  And laughs of maid and boy—
If you were thrall to sorrow,
  And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
  And I were lord in May,
We 'd throw with leaves for hours,
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day, like night, were shady,
  And night were bright, like day—
If you were April's lady,
  And I were lord in May.

Digitized by Google

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We 'd hunt down Love together,
Pluck out his flying feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein—
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE.

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams,
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap;
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear,
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated,
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though lone reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than Love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born,
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things:
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be—
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light,
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight,
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal,
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

ROCOCO.

Take hands and part with laughter;
Touch lips and part with tears;
Once more and no more after,
Whatever comes with years.
We twain shall not remeasure
The ways that left us twain;
Nor crush the lees of pleasure
From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
What will the mad gods do
For hate with me, I wonder,
Or what for love with you?
Forget them till November,
And dream there 's April yet;
Forget that I remember,
And dream that I forget.

Digitized by Google

Time found our tired Love sleeping,
And kissed away his breath;
But what should we do weeping,
Though light Love sleep to death?
We have drained his lips at leisure,
Till there 's not left to drain
A single sob of pleasure,
A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
Might quicken if they would;
Say that the soul is deathless;
Dream that the gods are good;
Say March may wed September,
And time divorce regret;
But not that you remember,
And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
What love scarce lives and hears:
We have seen on fervent faces
The pallor of strange tears:
We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,
Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
Foams round the feet of pleasure
The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover
And time bring back to time
The name of your first lover,
The ring of my first rhyme;
But rose-leaves of December
The frosts of June shall fret,
The day that you remember,
The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
In heaven we twain have known;
The grief of cruel kisses,
The joy whose mouth makes moan;
The pulse's pause and measure,
Where in one furtive vein
Throbs through the heart of pleasure
The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons
And love for treason's sake;
Room for the swift new seasons!
The years that burn and break,
Dismantle and dismember
Men's days and dreams, Juliette;
For love may not remember,
But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
Time withers him at root;
Bring all dead things and dying,
Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,
Where, crushed by three days' pressure,
Our three days' love lies slain;
And earlier leaf of pleasure,
And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
It may be flame will leap;
Unclose the soft close lashes,
Lift up the lids, and weep.
Light Love's extinguished ember,
Let one tear leave it wet
For one that you remember,
And ten that you forget.

RONDEL.

Kissing her hair I sat against her feet,
Wove and unwove it, wound and found it sweet;
Made fast therewith her hands, drew down her eyes,
Deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim skies;
With her own tresses bound and found her fair,
Kissing her hair.

Sleep were no sweeter than her face to me,
Sleep of cold sea-bloom under the cold sea;
What pain could get between my face and hers?
What new sweet thing would Love not relish worse?
Unless, perhaps, white Death had kissed me there,
Kissing her hair?

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Back to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year:

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be pressed
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow;

Digitized by Google

Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot

Move thee no more; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released,
Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame.

AVE ATQUE VALE.

[CHARLES PIERRE BAUDELAIRE was born in Paris in April, 1821, and died there in September, 1867. He translated Edgar A. Poe's stories, and published in 1857 a volume of original poems entitled "Les Fleurs du Mal," a portion of which was suppressed. Among his other works is "Les Paradis Artificiels," concerning opium and hasheesh.]

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?
Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleamings of the northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet?

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
Blind gods that cannot spare.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us:
Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other,
Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
Seeing as men sow, men reap.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping,
That were athirst for sleep and no more life
And no more love, for peace and no more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
Spirit and body and all the springs of song,
Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
Is it not well where soul from body slips,
And flesh from bone divides without a pang,
As dew from flower-bell drips?

It is enough; the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend,
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning
No triumph and no labor and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith naught,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet
Of some pale Titan woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still keep
The savor and shade of old-world pine-forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of derision,
What of life is there, what of ill or good?
Are the fruits gray like dust or bright like blood?
Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,
The faint fields quicken any terrene root,
In low lands where the sun and moon are mute,
And all the stars keep silence? Are there flowers
At all, or any fruit?

Alas! but though my flying song flies after,
O sweet strange elder singer, they more fleet
Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious laughter
From the blind tongueless warders of the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tears
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
And from pale mouths some cadence of dead sighs,
These only, these the hearkening spirit hears,
Sees only such things rise.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.

Digitized by Google

What ails us with thee, who art wind and air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find,
Still and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

Not thee, oh never thee, in all time's changes;
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
My spirit from communion of thy song—
These memories and these melodies that throng
Veiled porches of a muse funereal
These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

I among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
And offering to the dead made, and their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey and spice my seedlands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of him the King,
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken,
There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poet's pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our god's heart yearns.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine;
And nourished them indeed with bitter bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
Who feeds our hearts with flame.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunsetting,
God of all suns and songs, he too bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,
And stains with tears her changing bosom chill;
That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,
That thing transformed that was the Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
Long since, and face no more called Erycine;
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god,
Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, compel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night,
And love's tired eyes and hands with barren bosom.
There is no help for these things; none to mend,
And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend,
Will make death clear or make life durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild wine,
And with wild notes about this dust of thine,
At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell
And wreathe an unseen shrine.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mournful garden
Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
Among the days departed?

For thee, oh now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,
And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobean womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done;
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.

Digitized by Google

DAVID GRAY.

David Gray was born at Duntiblae, near Glasgow, January 29, 1838. His father was a hand-loom weaver, and David was the eldest of many children. While he was still a boy, the family removed to Merkland, on the other side of the river Luggie, eight miles from Glasgow. David was intended for the ministry, and pursued a partial course of study at Glasgow University, where he was especially proficient as a linguist.

He had spent some time there as a private tutor, receiving but eight shillings a week, when he became ambitious of a literary career, and wrote to Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), enclosing manuscript poems and asking for advice. Milnes saw that he had genius, and became warmly interested in him, but strongly advised him not to go to London. He also wrote to Sydney Dobell, who gave him sound advice and substantial assistance.

His poem "The Luggie" was sent hither and yon, to all sorts of public and influential men, with wild appeals for their help in finding a publisher; but in vain. He said in a letter to a friend: "I sent it to G. H. Lewes, to Professor Masson, to Professor Aytoun, to Disraeli; but no one will *read* it. They swear they have no time. For my part, I think the poem will live, and so I care not whether I were drowned to-morrow." Subsequently Milnes recommended it to Thackeray for the "Cornhill Magazine," but Thackeray did not find it available.

Gray was impulsive, and believed thoroughly in his own genius. Advising him not to go to London was like advising a young writer not to print. He was determined to try his fortune in the great metropolis, and in May, 1860, he went thither, with his poems in his pocket. There he wandered about the streets for hours, with his carpet-bag in his hand, with no very definite object in view, and seeming utterly lost in the magnitude of the place. Partly because he had so little money, and partly because it seemed a romantic and fitting way to begin his new life of adventure, he spent the night in Hyde Park, instead of going to a lodging-house. There he took a hard cold.

Robert Buchanan had started for London the same day, but by a different route. They entered the city at different points, and it was a week before they met. Then they took lodgings together, and were ready to begin the world. Mr. Milnes and Charles Mackay procured a little work for Gray, and he was employed also in copying manuscripts for Lord Elgin's Japanese secretary. But the cold caught in the park was rapidly settling into consumption, and he soon found himself unable to work. Various plans were contrived for sending him to a warmer climate; but as he grew weaker, his boyish nature longed only for home, and Milnes sent him back to his father's at Merkland, where he died, December 3, 1861. Mainly through Dobell's efforts, a publisher had been found for his longest poem, and a proof-sheet of a single page reached him the day before he died. In a letter to a friend he had suggested his own epitaph:

> 'T was not a life—
> 'T was but a piece of childhood thrown away.

His poems, with a memoir by James Hedderwick and memorials by Lord Houghton, have been published in London and republished in Boston. He must not be confounded with another poet of the same name, who is a resident of Buffalo, N. Y., and has published some exquisite things in verse.

IN THE SHADOWS.

Enter sacred mortal! and in awe behold
  The chancel of a dying poet's mind,
Hung round, ah! not adorned, with pictures bold
  And quaint, but roughly touched for the refined.
The chancel, not the charnel-house! For I
  To God have raised a shrine immaculate
Therein, whereon His name to glorify,
  And daily mercies meekly celebrate.

So in, scared breather! here no hint of death—
  Skull or cross-bones suggesting sceptic fear;
Yea, rather calmer beauty, purer breath
  Inhaled from a diviner atmosphere.

If it must be; if it must be, O God!
  That I die young, and make no further moans;
That, underneath the unrespective sod,
  In unescutcheoned privacy, my bones
Shall crumble soon—then give me strength to bear
  The last convulsive throe of too sweet breath!

Digitized by Google

I tremble from the edge of life, to dare
  The dark and fatal leap, having no faith,
No glorious yearning for the Apocalypse;
  But like a child that in the night-time cries
For light, I cry, forgetting the eclipse
  Of knowledge and our human destinies.
O peevish and uncertain soul! obey
The law of life in patience till the Day.

"Whom the gods love die young." The thought is old;
  And yet it soothed the sweet Athenian mind.
I take it with all pleasure, overbold,
  Perhaps, yet to its virtue much inclined
By an inherent love for what is fair.
  This is the utter poetry of woe—
That the bright-flashing gods should cure despair
  By love, and make youth precious here below.
I die, being young; and, dying, could become
  A pagan, with the tender Grecian trust.
Let death, the fell anatomy, benumb
  The hand that writes, and fill my mouth with dust—
Chant no funereal theme, but, with a choral
Hymn, O ye mourners! hail immortal youth auroral!

With the tear-worthy four, consumption killed
  In youthful prime, before the nebulous mind
  Had its symmetric shapeliness defined,
Had its transcendent destiny fulfilled.—
May future ages grant me gracious room,
  With Pollok, in the voiceless solitude
  Finding his holiest rapture, happiest mood;
Poor White forever poring o'er the tomb;
  With Keats, whose lucid fancy mounting far
Saw heaven as an intenser, a more keen
Redintegration of the Beauty seen
  And felt by all the breathers on this star;
With gentle Bruce, flinging melodious blame
On the Future for an uncompleted name.

O many a time with Ovid have I borne
  My father's vain, yet well-meant reprimand,
  To leave the sweet-aired, clover-purpled land
Of ryhme—its Lares loftily forlorn,
With all their pure humanities unworn,
  To batten on the bare theologies!
  To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
Fed on one essence with the silver morn,
Were of all blasphemies the most insane.
  So deeplier given to the delicious spell
I clung to thee, heart-soothing Poesy!
Now on a sick-bed racked with arrowy pain
I lift white hands of gratitude, and cry,
  Spirit of God in Milton! was it well?

Last night, on coughing slightly with sharp pain,
  There came arterial blood, and with a sigh
Of absolute grief I cried in bitter vein,
  That drop is my death-warrant; I must die.
Poor meagre life is mine, meagre and poor!
  Rather a piece of childhood thrown away;
An adumbration faint; the overture
  To stifled music; year that ends in May;
The sweet beginning of a tale unknown;
  A dream unspoken; promise unfulfilled;
A morning with no noon, a rose unblown—
  All its deep rich vermilion crushed and killed
I' th' bud by frost:—Thus in false fear I cried,
Forgetting that to abolish death Christ died.

Sweetly, my mother! Go not yet away—
  I have not told my story. Oh, not yet,
With the fair past before me, can I lay
  My cheek upon the pillow to forget.
O sweet, fair past, my twenty years of youth
  Thus thrown away, not fashioning a man;
But fashioning a memory, forsooth!
  More feminine than follower of Pan.
O God! let me not die for years and more!
  Fulfil Thyself, and I will live then surely
Longer than a mere childhood. Now heart-sore,
  Weary, with being weary—weary, purely.
In dying, mother, I can find no pleasure
Except in being near thee without measure.

Hew Atlas for my monument; upraise
  A pyramid for my tomb, that, undestroyed
  By rank, oblivion, and the hungry void,
My name shall echo through prospective days.
O careless conqueror! cold, abysmal grave!
  Is it not sad—is it not sad, my heart—
  To smother young ambition, and depart
Unhonored and unwilling, like death's slave?
No rare immortal remnant of my thought
  Embalms my life; no poem, firmly reared
  Against the shock of time, ignobly feared—
But all my life's progression come to naught.
  Hew Atlas! build a pyramid in a plain!
  Oh, cool the fever burning in my brain!

From this entangling labyrinthine maze
  Of doctrine, creed, and theory; from vague,
  Vain speculations; the detested plague
Of spiritual pride, and vile affrays
Sectarian, good Lord, deliver me!
  Nature! thy placid monitory glory
  Shines uninterrogated, while the story
Goes round of this and that theology,
This creed, and that, till patience close the list.
  Once more on Carronben's wind-shrilling height
  To sit in sovereign solitude, and quite
Forget the hollow world—a pantheist
  Beyond Bonaventura! This were cheer
  Passing the tedious tale of shallow pulpiteer.

A vale of tears, a wilderness of woe,
  A sad unmeaning mystery of strife,
Reason with Passion strives, and Feeling ever
Battles with Conscience, clear-eyed arbiter.
  Thus spake I in sad mood not long ago,
To my dear father, of this human life,
  Its jars and fantasies. Soft answered he,
With soul of love strong as a mountain river:
  We make ourselves. Son, you are what you are
Neither by fate nor providence nor cause
  External: all unformed humanity
Waiteth the stamp of individual laws;
  And as you love and act, the plastic spirit
  Doth the impression evermore inherit.

Last Autumn we were four, and travelled far
  With Phœbe in her golden plenilune,
  O'er stubble-fields where sheaves of harvest boon

Digitized by Google

Stood slanted. Many a clear and steadfast star
Twinkled its radiance through crisp-leaved beeches,
Over the farm to which, with snatches rare
Of ancient ballads, songs, and saucy speeches,
He hurried, happy mad. Then each had there
A dove-eyed sister pining for him, four
Fair ladies legacied with loveliness,
Chaste as a group of stars, or lilies blown
In rural nunnery. O God! Thy sore,
Strange ways expound. Two to the grave have gone
Without apparent reason more or less.

Now, while the long-delaying ash assumes
The delicate April green, and, loud and clear,
Through the cool, yellow, mellow twilight glooms,
The thrush's song enchants the captive ear;
Now, while a shower is pleasant in the falling,
Stirring the still perfume that wakes around;
Now, that doves mourn, and from the distance calling,
The cuckoo answers, with a sovereign sound,
Come, with thy native heart, O true and tried!
But leave all books; for what with converse high,
Flavored with Attic wit, the time shall glide
On smoothly, as a river floweth by,
Or as on stately pinion, through the gray
Evening, the culver cuts his liquid way.

Why are all fair things at their death the fairest?
Beauty the beautifullest in decay?
Why doth rich sunset clothe each closing day
With ever-new, apparelling the rarest?
Why are the sweetest melodies all born
Of pain and sorrow? Mourneth not the dove
In the green forest gloom, an absent love?
Leaning her breast against that cruel thorn,
Doth not the nightingale, poor bird, complain
And integrate her uncontrollable woe
To such perfection, that to hear is pain?
Thus, Sorrow and Death—alone realities—
Sweeten their ministration, and bestow
On troublous life a relish of the skies!

And well-belovèd, is this all, this all?
Gone, like a vapor which the potent morn
Kills, and in killing glorifies! I call
Through the lone night for thee, my dear first-born
Soul-fellow! but my heart vibrates in vain.
Ah! well I know, and often fancy forms
The weather-blown churchyard where thou art lain,
The churchyard whistling to the frequent storms.
But down the valley, by the river-side,
Huge walnut-trees—bronze-foliaged, motionless
As leaves of metal—in their shadows hide
Warm nests, low music, and true tenderness.
But thou, betrothed! art far from me, from me.
O heart! be merciful—I loved him utterly.

Father! when I have passed, with deathly swoon,
Into the ghost-world, immaterial, dim,
O may nor time nor circumstance dislimn
My image from thy memory, as noon
Steals from the fainting bloom the cooling dew!
Like flower, itself completing bud and bell,
In lonely thicket, be thy sorrow true,
And in expression secret. Worse than hell
To see the grave hypocrisy, to hear
The crocodilian sighs of summer friends
Outraging grief's assuasive, holy ends!
But thou art faithful, father, and sincere;
And in thy brain the love of me shall dwell
Like the memorial music in the curved sea-shell.

From my sick-bed gazing upon the west,
Where all the bright effulgencies of day
Lay steeped in sunless vapors, raw and gray—
Herein (methought) is mournfully expressed
The end of false ambitions, sullen doom
Of my brave hopes, Promethean desires:
Barren and perfumeless, my name expires
Like summer-day setting in joyless gloom.
Yet faint I not in sceptical dismay,
Upheld by the belief that all pure thought
Is deathless, perfect: that the truths out-wrought
By the laborious mind cannot decay,
Being evolutions of that sovereign mind
Akin to man's; yet orbed, exhaustless, undefined.

The daisy-flower is to the summer sweet,
Though utterly unknown it live and die;
The spheral harmony were incomplete
Did the dewed laverock mount no more the sky,
Because her music's linkèd sorcery
Bewitched no mortal heart to heavenly mood.
This is the law of Nature, that the deed
Should dedicate its excellence to God,
And in so doing find sufficient meed.
Then why should I make these heart-burning cries
In sickly rhyme with morbid feeling rife,
For fame and temporal felicities!
Forgetting that in holy labor lies
The scholarship severe of human life.

O God, it is a terrible thing to die
Into the inextinguishable life;
To leave this known world with a feeble cry,
All its poor jarring and ignoble strife.
Oh, that some shadowy spectre would disclose
The future, and the soul's confineless hunger
Satisfy with some knowledge of repose!
For here the lusts of avarice waxeth stronger,
Making life hateful; youth alone is true,
Full of a glorious self-forgetfulness:
Better to die inhabiting the new
Kingdom of faith and promise, and confess,
Even in the agony and last eclipse,
Some revelation of the Apocalypse!

Wise in his day that heathen emperor,
To whom, each morrow, came a slave, and cried,

Digitized by Google

"Philip, remember thou must die:" no more.
To me such daily voice were misapplied—
Disease guests with me; and each cough, or cramp,
Or aching, like Macedonian slave,
Is my *memento mori*. 'T is the stamp
Of God's true life to be in dying brave.
"I fear not death, but dying," *—not the long
Hereafter, sweetened by immortal love;
But the quick, terrible last breath—the strong
Convulsion. Oh, my Lord of breath above!
Grant me a quiet end, in easeful rest—
A sweet removal, on my mother's breast.

October's gold is dim, the forests rot,
The weary rain falls ceaseless, while the day
Is wrapped in damp. In mire of village way
The hedge-row leaves are stamped, and, all forgot,
The broodless nest sits visible in the thorn.
Autumn, among her drooping marigolds,
Weeps all her garnered sheaves, and empty folds,
And dripping orchards—plundered and forlorn.
The season is a dead one, and I die!
No more, no more for me the spring shall make
A resurrection in the earth, and take
The death from out her heart—O God, I die!
The cold throat-mist creeps nearer, till I breathe
Corruption. Drop, stark night, upon my death!

Die down, O dismal day! and let me live.
And come, blue deeps! magnificently strewn
With colored clouds—large, light, and fugitive—
By upper winds through pompous motions blown.
Now it is death in life—a vapor dense
Creeps round my window till I cannot see
The far snow-shining mountains, and the glens
Shagging the mountain-tops. O God! make free
This barren, shackled earth, so deadly cold—
Breathe gently forth Thy spring, till winter flies
In rude amazement, fearful and yet bold,
While she performs her customed charities.
I weigh the loaded hours till life is bare—
O God! for one clear day, a snowdrop, and sweet air!

Sometimes, when sunshine and blue sky prevail—
When spent winds sleep, and, from the budding larch,
Small birds, with incomplete, vague sweetness, hail
The unconfirmed yet quickening life of March—
Then say I to myself, half-eased of care,
Toying with hope as with a maiden's token—
"This glorious, invisible fresh air
Will clear my blood till the disease be broken."
But slowly, from the wild and infinite west,
Upsails a cloud, full-charged with bitter sleet.
The omen gives my spirit much unrest;
I fling aside the hope, as indiscreet—
A false enchantment, treacherous and fair—
And sink into my habit of despair.

O Winter! wilt thou never, never go?
O Summer! but I weary for thy coming;
Longing once more to hear the Luggie flow,
And frugal bees laboriously humming.
Now, the east wind diseases the infirm,
And I must crouch in corners from rough weather.
Sometimes a winter sunset is a charm—
When the fired clouds, compacted, blaze together,
And the large sun dips, red, behind the hills.
I, from my window, can behold this pleasure;
And the eternal moon, what time she fills
Her orb with argent, treading a soft measure,
With queenly motion of a bridal mood,
Through the white spaces of infinitude.

O beautiful moon! O beautiful moon! again
Thou persecutest me until I bend
My brow, and soothe the aching of my brain.
I cannot see what handmaidens attend
Thy silver passage as the heaven clears;
For, like a slender mist, a sweet vexation
Works in my heart, till the impulsive tears
Confess the bitter pain of adoration.
Oh, too, too beautiful moon! lift the white shell
Of thy soft splendor through the shining air!
I own the magic power, the witching spell,
And, blinded by thy beauty, call thee fair!
Alas! not often now thy silver horn
Shall me delight with dreams and mystic love forlorn!

'T is April, yet the wind retains its tooth.
I cannot venture in the biting air,
But sit and feign wild trash and dreams uncouth,
"Stretched on the rack of a too-easy chair."
And when the day has howled itself to sleep,
The lamp is lighted in my little room;
And lowly, as the tender lapwings creep,
Comes my own mother, with her love's perfume.
O living sons with living mothers! learn
Their worth, and use them gently, with no chiding;
For youth, I know, is quick; of temper stern
Sometimes; and apt to blunder without guiding.
So was I long, but now I see her move,
Transfigured in the radiant mist of love.

Lying awake at holy eventide,
While in clear mournfulness the throstle's hymn
Hushes the night, and the great west grown dim
Laments the sunset's evanescent pride:
Lo! I behold an orb of silver brightly
Grow from the fringe of sunset, like a dream
From Thought's severe infinitude, and nightly
Show forth God's glory in its sacred gleam.
Ah, Hesper! maidenliest star that ere

* This is a saying of Socrates.

Digitized by Google

Twinkled in firmament! cool gloaming's prime
  Cheerer, whose fairness maketh wondrous fair
  Old pastorals, and the Spenserian rhyme:—
Thy soft seduction doth my soul enthral
Like music, with a dying, dying fall!

There are three bonnie Scottish melodies,
  So native to the music of my soul,
That of its humors they seem prophecies.
  The ravishment of Chaucer was less whole,
Less perfect, when the April nightingale
  Let itself in upon him. Surely, Lord!
  Before whom psaltery and clarichord,
Concentual with saintly song, prevail,
  There lurks some subtile sorcery, to Thee
And heaven akin, in each woe-burning air!
  "Land of the Leal," and "Bonnie Bessie Lee,"
And "Home sweet Home," the lilt of love's despair.
  Now, in remembrance even, the feelings speak,
  For lo! a shower of grace is on my cheek.

Oh, the impassable sorrow, mother mine!
  Of the sweet, mournful air which, clear and well,
For me thou singest! Never the divine
  Mohammedan harper, famous Israfel,
Such rich enchanting luxury of woe
  Elicited from all his golden strings!
Therefore, dear singer sad! chant clear, and low,
  And lovingly, the bard's imaginings.
O poet unknown! conning thy verses o'er
  In lone, dim places, sorrowfully sweet;
And O musician! touching the quick core
  Of pity, when thy skilful closes meet—
My tears confess your witchery as they flow,
Since I, too, *wear* away like the unenduring snow.

Uplift in unparticipated night
  O indefinable Being! far retired
From mortal ken in uncreated light:
  While demonstrating glories unacquired
When shall the wavering sciences evolve
  The infinite secret, Thee? What mind shall scan
The tenor of thy workmanship, or solve
  The dark, perplexing destiny of man?
Oh, in the hereafter border-land of wonder,
  Shall the proud world's inveterate tale be told,
The curtain of all mysteries torn asunder,
  The cerements from the living soul unrolled?
Impatient questioner, soon, soon shall death
Reveal to thee these dim phantasmata of faith.

And thus proceeds the mode of human life
  From mystery to mystery again;
From God to God, through grandeur, grief, and strife,
  A hurried plunge into the dark inane
Whence had we lately sprung. And is 't forever?
  Ah! sense is blind beyond the gaping clay,
And all the eyes of faith can see it never.
  We know the bright-haired sun will bring the day,
Like glorious book of silent prophecy;
  Majestic Night assume her starry throne;
The wondrous seasons come and go: but we
  Die, and to mortal ken forever gone.
Who shall pry further? who shall kindle light
In the dread bosom of the infinite?

O thou of purer eyes than to behold
  Uncleanness! sift my soul, removing all
  Strange thoughts, imaginings fantastical,
Iniquitous allurements manifold.
Make it a spiritual ark; abode
  Severely sacred, perfumed, sanctified,
  Wherein the Prince of Purities may abide—
The holy and eternal Spirit of God.
  The gross, adhesive loathsomeness of sin,
Give me to see. Yet, O far more, far more,
That beautiful purity which the saints adore
  In a consummate Paradise within
The Veil—O Lord, upon my soul bestow,
An earnest of that purity here below.

SNOW.

Flowers upon the summer lea,
  Daisies, kingcups, pale primroses—
These are sung from sea to sea,
  As many a darling rhyme discloses.
Tangled wood and hawthorn dale
In many a songful snatch prevail;
But never yet, as well I mind,
In all their verses can I find
A simple tune, with quiet flow,
To match the falling of the snow.

Oh, weary passed each winter day,
  And windily howled each winter night;
Oh, miry grew each village way,
  And mists enfolded every height;
And ever on the window-pane
A froward gust blew down with rain,
And day by day in tawny brown
The Luggie stream came heaving down:—
I could have fallen asleep and dreamed
Until again spring sunshine gleamed.

And what! said I, is this the mode
  That Winter kings it now-a-days?
The robin keeps his own abode,
  And pipes his independent lays.
I 've seen the day on Merkland Hill,
That snow has fallen with a will,
Even in November! Now, alas!
The whole year round we see the grass:—
Ah, winter now may come and go
Without a single fall of snow.

It was the latest day but one
  Of winter, as I questioned thus;
And sooth! an angry mood was on,
  As at a thing most scandalous;—
When lo! some hailstones on the pane
With sudden tinkle rang amain,
Till in an ecstasy of joy
I clapped and shouted like a boy—
Oh, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

Digitized by Google

It draped the naked sycamore
On Foordcroft Hill, above the well;
The elms of Rosebank o'er and o'er
Were silvered richly as it fell:
The distant Campsie peaks were lost,
And farthest Criftin with his host
Of gloomy pine-trees disappeared,
Nor even a lonely ridge upreared—
Oh, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

Afar upon the Solsgirth moor,
Each heather sprig of withered brown
Is fringed with thread of silver pure
As slow the soft flakes waver down;
And on Glenconner's lonely path,
And Gartshore's still and open strath,
It falleth, quiet as the birth
Of morning o'er the quickening earth:—
Oh, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

And all around our Merkland home
Is laid a sheet of virgin lawn;
On fairer, softer, ne'er did roam
The nimble Oread or Faun.
There is a wonder in the air,
A living beauty everywhere;
As if the whole had ne'er been planned,
But touched by Merlin's famous wand,
Suddenly woke beneath his hand
To potent bliss in fairy show—
A mighty ravishment of snow!

A WINTER WALK.

John Frost, old Nature's jeweller, had beautified the leas,
And the lustre of his fretwork was twinkling on the trees,
As we rambled o'er the meadows in a meditative ease.

We had left the town behind us for a roaming holiday,
Beneath an arc of gloom, all dark and indistinct it lay,
And the fog was wreathed about it like a robe of iron-gray.

But a carpeting of leaflets, and a canopy of blue,
And the mystery of ether as the warming sunshine grew,
Sent a mellow thrill of happiness our eager spirits through.

And over lanes, where winter bluff had shook his hoary beard,
Where in the naked hedgerows the broodless nests appeared,
And the brown leaves of the beech-tree were with silver gloss veneered.

We wandered and we pondered till half the morn was spent,
And the red orb through the tangled boughs his cunning vigor sent,
And the valley mists all melted at his glance omnipotent.

Dim on a sloping hillside, clothed in a misty pall,
Stands a turret gray and hoary, where the ancient ivies crawl,
Their Arab arms round casement, sill, and door, and mould'ring wall.

And there we halted half an hour within a roofless hall,
'Neath a bower of wildest ivy hanging downward from the wall,
Bearing in its grand luxuriance a flower funereal.

There we talked of the gay plumes erst bent to pass the lintel old,
The maidens that were moved to smile at gallant wooers bold,
The jovial nights of brave carouse, the wine-cups manifold.

And all the faded glories of the mediæval time,
When the age was in its manhood, and the land was in its prime,
And manly deeds were chanted in a bold heroic rhyme.

Then, plucking each a sprig, bedecked with simple yellow flower,
We scrambled sadly downward from our old enchanted bower,
And the glory of the sunshine fell upon us like a shower.

Once more beneath the concave of a clear effulgent sky,
Where flocks of cawing rooks to the mansion wavered by—
A mansion standing coldly 'mid a windy rookery.

And over breezy mountains, where the poacher, with his gun,
Stood lonely as a bowlder-stone, 'tween earth and shining sun,
We wandered and we pondered till the winter day was done.

BY THE FIRE.

Oh, many a leaf will fall to-night,
As she wanders through the wood!
And many an angry gust will break
The dreary solitude.
I wonder if she's past the bridge,
Where Luggie moans beneath;
While rain-drops clash in planted lines
On rivulet and heath.
Disease hath laid his palsied palm
Upon my aching brow;
The headlong blood of twenty-one
Is thin and sluggish now.
'T is nearly ten! A fearful night,
Without a single star
To light the shadow on her soul
With sparkle from afar:
The moon is canopied with clouds,
And her burden it is sore;—

Digitized by Google

What would wee Jackie do, if he
  Should never see her more?
Ay, light the lamp, and hang it up
  At the window fair and free;
'T will be a beacon on the hill
  To let your mother see.
And trim it well, my little Ann,
  For the night is wet and cold,
And you know the weary, winding way
  Across the miry wold.
All drenched will be her simple gown,
  And the wet will reach her skin:
I wish that I could wander down,
  And the red quarry win,
To take the burden from her back,
  And place it upon mine;
With words of cheerful condolence,
  Not uttered to repine.
You have a kindly mother, dears,
  As ever bore a child,
And Heaven knows I love her well
  In passion undefiled.
Ah me! I never thought that she
  Would brave a night like this,
While I sat weaving by the fire
  A web of fantasies.
How the winds beat this home of ours
  With arrow-falls of rain;
This lonely home upon the hill
  They beat with might and main.
And 'mid the tempest one lone heart
  Anticipates the glow,
Whence, all her weary journey done,
  Shall happy welcome flow.
'T is after ten! Oh, were she here,
  Young man although I be,
I could fall down upon her neck,
  And weep right gushingly!
I have not loved her half enough,
  The dear old toiling one,
The silent watcher by my bed,
  In shadow or in sun.

THE ANEMONE.

I HAVE wandered far to-day,
In a pleased unquiet way;
Over hill and songful hollow,
  Vernal byways, fresh and fair,
Did I simple fancies follow;
  Till, upon a hillside bare,
Suddenly I chanced to see
A little white anemone.

Beneath a clump of furze it grew;
And never mortal eye did view
Its rathe and slender beauty, till
  I saw it in no mocking mood;
For with it sweetness did it fill
  To me the ample solitude.
A fond remembrance made me see
Strange light in the anemone.

One April day when I was seven,
Beneath the clear and deepening heaven,
My father, God preserve him! went
  With me a Scottish mile and more;
And in a playful merriment
  He decked my bonnet o'er and o'er—
To fling a sunshine on his ease—
With tenderest anemones.

Now, gentle reader, as I live,
This snowy little bloom did give
My being most endearing throes.
  I saw my father in his prime;
But youth it comes, and youth it goes,
  And he has spent his blithest time:
Yet dearer grown through all to me,
And dearer the anemone.

So with the spirit of a sage
I plucked it from its hermitage,
And placed it 'tween the sacred leaves
  Of *Agnes' Eve* at that rare part
Where she her fragrant robe unweaves,
  And with a gently beating heart,
In troubled bliss and balmy woe,
Lies down to dream of Porphyro.

Let others sing of that and this,
In war and science find their bliss;
Vainly they seek and will not find
  The subtle lore that Nature brings
Unto the reverential mind,
  The pathos worn by common things,
By every flower that lights the lea,
And by the pale anemone.

MY BROTHER.

THE goldening peach on the orchard-wall,
  Soft feeding in the sun,
Hath never so downy and rosy a cheek
  As this laughing little one.
The brook that murmurs and dimples alone
  Through glen, and grove, and lea,
Hath never a life so merry and true
  As my brown little brother of three.
From flower to flower, and from bower to bower,
  In my mother's garden green,
A-peering at this, and a-cheering at that,
  The funniest ever was seen;
Now throwing himself in his mother's lap,
  With his cheek upon her breast,
He tells his wonderful travels, forsooth!
  And chatters himself to rest.
And what may become of that brother of mine,
  Asleep in his mother's bosom?
Will the wee rosy bud of his being, at last
  Into a wild-flower blossom?
Will the hopes that are deepening as silent and fair
  As the azure about his eye,
Be told in glory and motherly pride,
  Or answered with a sigh?
Let the curtain rest: for, alas! 't is told
  That mercy's hand benign
Hath woven and spun the gossamer thread
  That forms the fabric so fine.
Then dream, dearest Jackie! thy sinless dream,
  And waken as blithe and as free;
There 's many a change in twenty long years,
  My brown little brother of three.

Digitized by Google

AUSTIN DOBSON.

AUSTIN DOBSON was born in 1840. He is a graceful writer of *vers de société*, with strong indications of power to do something vastly better. He is a frequent contributor to the London magazines, and in 1873 published a collection of his poems, under the title "Vignettes in Rhyme," which quickly passed to a second edition.

THE PARADOX OF TIME.

TIME goes, you say? Ah no!
Alas! time stays, we go;
Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For youth were always ours?
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Ours is the eyes' deceit
Of men whose flying feet
Lead through some landscape low;
We pass, and think we see
The earth's fixed surface flee;
Alas, Time stays—we go!

Once, in the days of old,
Your locks were curling gold,
And mine had shamed the crow;
Now, in the selfsame stage,
We've reached the silver age;
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

Once, when my voice was strong,
I filled the woods with song,
To praise your "rose" and "snow;"
My bird, that sung, is dead;
Where are your roses fled?
Alas, Time stays—we go!

See, in what traversed ways,
What backward fate delays
The hopes we used to know;
Where are our old desires—
Ah, where those vanished fires?
Time goes, you say?—ah no!

How far, how far, O Sweet,
The past behind our feet
Lies in the even-glow!
Now, on the forward way,
Let us fold hands and pray;
Alas, Time stays—we go!

A DIALOGUE FROM PLATO.

I'D "read" three hours. Both notes and text
Were fast a mist becoming;
In bounced a vagrant bee, perplexed,
And filled the room with humming,

Then out. The casement's leafage sways,
And, parted light, discloses
Miss Di., with hat and book,—a maze
Of muslin mixed with roses.

"You're reading Greek?" "I am—and you?"
"Oh, mine's a mere romancer!"
"So Plato is." "Then read him—do;
And I'll read mine in answer."

I read. "My Plato (Plato, too,—
That wisdom thus should harden!)
Declares 'blue eyes look doubly blue
Beneath a Dolly Varden.'"

She smiled. "My book in turn avers
(No author's name is stated)
That sometimes those Philosophers
Are sadly mis-translated."

"But hear,—the next's in stronger style:
The Cynic School asserted
That two red lips which part and smile
May not be controverted!"

She smiled once more—"My book, I find,
Observes some modern doctors
Would make the Cynics out a kind
Of album-verse concoctors."

Then I—"Why not? 'Ephesian law,
No less than time's tradition,
Enjoined fair speech on all who saw
Diana's apparition.'"

She blushed—this time. "If Plato's page
No wiser precept teaches,

Digitized by Google

Then I 'd renounce that doubtful sage,
  And walk to Burnham-beeches."

"Agreed," I said. "For Socrates
  (I find he too is talking)
Thinks Learning can't remain at ease
  While Beauty goes a-walking."

She read no more. I leaped the sill;
  The sequel's scarce essential—
Nay, more than this, I hold it still
  Profoundly confidential.

A GARDEN IDYL.

A LADY. A POET.

THE LADY.

SIR POET, ere you crossed the lawn
  (If it was wrong to watch you, pardon),
Behind this weeping birch withdrawn,
  I watched you saunter round the garden.
I saw you bend beside the phlox,
  Pluck, as you passed, a sprig of myrtle,
Review my well-ranged hollyhocks,
  Smile at the fountain's slender spurtle;

You paused beneath the cherry-tree,
  Where my marauder thrush was singing,
Peered at the bee-hives curiously,
  And narrowly escaped a stinging;
And then—you see I watched—you passed
  Down the espalier walk that reaches
Out to the western wall, and last
  Dropped on the seat before the peaches.

What was your thought? You waited long.
  Sublime or graceful,—grave,—satiric?
A Morris Greek-and-Gothic song?
  A tender Tennysonian lyric?
Tell me. That garden-seat shall be,
  So long as speech renown disperses,
Illustrious as the spot where he—
  The gifted Blank—composed his verses.

THE POET.

Madam,—whose uncensorious eye
  Grows gracious over certain pages,
Wherein the Jester's maxims lie,
  It may be, thicker than the Sage's—
I hear but to obey, and could
  Mere wish of mine the pleasure do you,
Some verse as whimsical as Hood,
  As gay as Praed,—should answer to you.

But, though the common voice proclaims
  Our only serious vocation
Confined to giving nothing names,
  And dreams a "local habitation;"
Believe me, there are tuneless days,
  When neither marble, brass, nor vellum,
Would profit much by any lays
  That haunt the poet's cerebellum.

More empty things, I fear, than rhymes,
  More idle things than songs, absorb it;
The "finely-frenzied" eye, at times,
  Reposes mildly in its orbit;
And, painful truth, at times, to him,
  Whose jog-trot thought is nowise restive,
"A primrose by a river's brim"
  Is absolutely unsuggestive.

The fickle Muse! As ladies will,
  She sometimes wearies of her wooer;
A goddess, yet a woman still,
  She flies the more that we pursue her;
In short, with worst as well as best,
  Five months in six, your hapless poet
Is just as prosy as the rest,
  But cannot comfortably show it.

You thought, no doubt, the garden-scent
  Brings back some brief-winged bright sensation
Of love that came and love that went,—
  Some fragrance of a lost flirtation,
Born when the cuckoo changes song,
  Dead ere the apple's red is on it,
That should have been an epic long,
  Yet scarcely served to fill a sonnet.

Or else you thought,—the murmuring noon,
  He turns it to a lyric sweeter,
With birds that gossip in the tune,
  And windy bough-swing in the metre;
Or else the zigzag fruit-tree arms
  Recall some dream of harp-pressed bosoms,
Round singing mouths, and chanted charms,
  And mediæval orchard-blossoms,—

Quite *à la mode*. Alas for prose,—
  My vagrant fancies only rambled
Back to the red-walled Rectory close,
  Where first my graceless boyhood gambolled,
Climbed on the dial, teased the fish,
  And chased the kitten round the beeches,
Till widening instincts made me wish
  For certain slowly-ripening peaches.

Three peaches. Not the Graces three
  Had more equality of beauty:
I would not look, yet went to see;
  I wrestled with Desire and Duty;
I felt the pangs of those who feel
  The Laws of Property beset them;
The conflict made my reason reel,
  And, half-abstractedly, I ate them;—

Or Two of them. Forthwith Despair—
  More keen that one of these was rotten—
Moved me to seek some forest lair
  Where I might hide and dwell forgotten,
Attired in skins, by berries stained,
  Absolved from brushes and ablution;—
But, ere my sylvan haunt was gained,
  Fate gave me up to execution.

I saw it all but now. The grin
  That gnarled old Gardener Sandy's features;
My father, scholar-like and thin,
  Unroused, the tenderest of creatures;
I saw—ah me—I saw again
  My dear and deprecating mother;
And then, remembering the cane,
  Regretted—that I 'd left the other.

Digitized by Google

A VIRTUOSO.

Be seated, pray. "A grave appeal?"
The sufferers by the war, of course;
Ah, what a sight for us who feel,—
This monstrous *mélodrame* of Force!
We, sir, we connoisseurs, should know,
On whom its heaviest burden falls;
Collections shattered at a blow,
Museums turned to hospitals?

"And worse," you say; "the wide distress!"
Alas! 't is true distress exists,
Though, let me add, our worthy Press
Have no mean skill as colorists;—
Speaking of color, next your seat
There hangs a sketch from Vernet's hand;
Some Moscow fancy, incomplete,
Yet not indifferently planned;

Note specially the gray old Guard,
Who tears his tattered coat to wrap
A closer bandage round the scarred
And frozen comrade in his lap;—
But, as regards the present war,—
Now don't you think our pride of pence
Goes—may I say it?—somewhat far
For objects of benevolence?

You hesitate. For my part, I—
Though ranking Paris next to Rome,
Æsthetically—still reply
That "Charity begins at Home."
The words remind me. Did you catch
My so-named "Hunt?" The girl 's a gem;
And look how those lean rascals snatch
The pile of scraps she brings to them!

"But your appeal 's for home," you say,
"For home, and English poor!" Indeed!
I thought Philanthropy to-day
Was blind to mere domestic need—
However sore—Yet though one grants
That home should have the foremost claims,
At least these Continental wants
Assume intelligible names;

While here with us—Ah! who could hope
To verify the varied pleas,
Or from his private means to cope
With all our shrill necessities?
Impossible! One might as well
Attempt comparison of creeds;
Or fill that huge Malayan shell
With these half-dozen Indian beads.

Moreover, add that every one
So well exalts his pet distress,
'T is—Give to all, or give to none,
If you 'd avoid invidiousness.
Your case, I feel, is sad as A.'s,
The same applies to B.'s and C.'s;
By my selection I should raise
An alphabet of rivalries;

And life is short—I see you look
At yonder dish, a priceless bit
You 'll find it etched in Jacquemart's book,
They say that Raphael painted it;—
And life is short, you understand:
So, if I only hold you out
An open though an empty hand,
Why, you 'll forgive me, I 've no doubt.

Nay, do not rise. You seem amused;
One can but be consistent, sir!
'T was on these grounds I just refused
Some gushing lady-almoner,—
Believe me, on these very grounds.
Good-bye, then. Ah, a rarity!
That cost me quite three hundred pounds,—
That Dürer figure,—"Charity."

INCOGNITA.

Just for a space that I met her—
Just for a day in the train!
It began when she feared it would wet her,
That tiniest spurtle of rain:
So we tucked a great rug in the sashes,
And carefully padded the pane;
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to do it again!

Then it grew when she begged me to reach her
A dressing-case under the seat;
She was "really so tiny a creature,
That she needed a stool for her feet!"
Which was promptly arranged to her order
With a care that was even minute,
And a glimpse—of an open-work border,
And a glance—of the fairyest boot.

Then it drooped, and revived at some novel—
"Were they houses for men or for pigs?"
Then it shifted to muscular novels,
With a little digression on prigs:
She thought "Wives and Daughters" "so jolly;"
"Had I read it?" She knew when I had,
Like the rest, I should dote upon "Molly;"
And "poor Mrs. Gaskell—how sad!"

"Like Browning?" "But so-so." His proof lay
Too deep for her frivolous mood,
That preferred your mere metrical *soufflé*
To the stronger poetical food;
Yet at times he was good—"as a tonic;"
Was Tennyson writing just now?
And was this new poet Byronic,
And clever, and naughty, or how?

Then we trifled with concerts and croquet,
Then she daintily dusted her face;
Then she sprinkled herself with "Ess Bouquet,"
Fished out from the foregoing case;
And we chattered of Gassier and Grisi,
And voted Aunt Sally a bore;
Discussed if the tight rope were easy,
Or Chopin much harder than Spohr.

And oh! the odd things that she quoted,
With the prettiest possible look,
And the price of two buns that she noted
In the prettiest possible book;
While her talk like a musical rillet
Flashed on with the hours that flew,

Digitized by Google

And the carriage, her smile seemed to fill it
With just enough summer—for Two.

Till at last in her corner, peeping
From a nest of rugs and of furs,
With the white shut eyelids sleeping
On those dangerous looks of hers,
She seemed like a snowdrop breaking,
Not wholly alive nor dead,
But with one blind impulse making
To the sounds of the spring overhead;

And I watched in the lamplight's swerving
The shade of the down-dropped lid,
And the lip-line's delicate curving,
Where a slumbering smile lay hid,
Till I longed that, rather than sever,
The train should shriek into space,
And carry us onward—forever,—
Me and that beautiful face.

But she suddenly woke in a fidget,
With fears she was "nearly at home,"
And talk of a certain Aunt Bridget,
Whom I mentally wished—well at Rome;
Got out at the very next station,
Looking back with a merry *Bon Soir*,
Adding, too, to my utter vexation,
A surplus, unkind *Au Revoir*.

So left me to muse on her graces,
To doze and to muse, till I dreamed
That we sailed through the sunniest places
In a glorified galley, it seemed;
But the cabin was made of a carriage,
And the ocean was Eau-de-Cologne,
And we split on a rock labelled MARRIAGE,
And I woke,—as cold as a stone.

And that's how I lost her—a jewel—
Incognita—one in a crowd,
Not prudent enough to be cruel,
Not worldly enough to be proud.
It was just a shut lid and its lashes,
Just a few hours in a train,
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes
Longing to see her again!

THE LOVE-LETTER.

IF this should fail, why then I scarcely know
What could succeed. Here's brilliancy (and banter),
Byron *ad lib.*, a chapter of Rousseau;
If this should fail, then *tempora mutantur;*
Style's out of date, and love, as a profession,
Acquires no aid from beauty of expression.

"The men who think as I, I fear, are few,"
(Cynics would say 't were well if they were fewer);
"I am not what I seem,"—(indeed, 't is true
Though, as a sentiment, it might be newer);
"Mine is a soul whose deeper feelings lie
More deep than words"—(as these exemplify).

"I will not say when first your beauty's sun
Illumed my life,"—(it needs imagination);
"For me to see you and to love were one,"
(This will account for some precipitation);
"Let it suffice that worship more devoted
Ne'er throbbed," *et cætera.* The rest is quoted.

"If Love can look with all-prophetic eye,"
(Ah, if he could, how many would be single!),
"If truly spirit unto spirit cry,"
(The ears of some most terribly must tingle!)
"Then I have dreamed you will not turn your face."
This next, I think, is more than commonplace.

"Why should we speak, if Love, interpreting,
Forestall the speech with favor found before?
Why should we plead? it were an idle thing.
If Love himself be Love's ambassador!"
Blot, as I live. Shall we erase it? No;
'T will show we write *currente calamo.*

"My fate, my fortune, I commit to you,
(In point of fact, the latter 's not extensive);
"Without you I am poor indeed,"—(strike through,
'T is true but crude—'t would make her apprehensive);
My life is yours—I lay it at your feet,"
(Having no choice but Hymen or the Fleet).

"Give me the right to stand within the shrine,
Where never yet my faltering feet intruded;
Give me the right to call you wholly mine,"
(That is, Consols and Three per Cents included);
"To guard your rest from every care that cankers,
To keep your life,"—(and balance at your banker's).

"Compel me not to long for your reply;
Suspense makes havoc with the mind"—(and muscles);
"Winged Hope takes flight,"—(which means that I must fly,
Default of funds, to Paris or to Brussels);
"I cannot wait! My own, my queen—Priscilla!
Write by return." And *now* for a Manila!

"Miss Blank," at "Blank." Jemima, let it go,
And I, meanwhile, will idle with "Sir Walter;"
Stay, let me keep the first rough copy, though,
'T will serve again. There's but the name to alter,
And Love, that needs, must knock at every portal,
In formâ pauperis. We are but mortal!

Digitized by Google

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

Robert Buchanan was born in Glasgow, Scotland, August 18, 1841. He was educated at the High School and the university of his native town, and in 1860 started for London with his friend David Gray. They took different routes, however, and though they arrived in the metropolis on the same day, did not meet for a week. They had both come as literary adventurers, with manuscript poems in their valises. Buchanan published at once his "Undertones," a volume of very promising though not very great poems. This was followed by "Idyls and Legends of Inverburn," 1865; "London Poems," 1866; "The Book of the Visions seen by Orm, the Celt," 1870; "Ballad Stories of the Affections," 1870; "The Land of Lorne," in prose, 1871; "Napoleon Fallen, a Lyrical Drama," 1871; and "The Drama of Kings," 1871. He has also written a tragedy called "The Witch-Finder" and a comedy called "A Madcap Prince," both of which have been produced on the stage. In 1869 he gave readings in London from his own poems.

Mr. Buchanan, judged by his best work, ranks high as a poet; but he has some very unpoetical traits. His mind runs to controversy, and he makes haste to shed premature ink. In 1871 he published in the "Contemporary Review," under the assumed name of Thomas Maitland, an article on "The Fleshly School of Poetry," wherein some of his contemporaries were disparaged, to his own exaltation. This elicited a reply from Swinburne, and Buchanan finally acknowledged the authorship of the article, and republished it with additions. In 1876 he made a sweeping assault on American authors, for their supposed unfair treatment of Walt Whitman, and on the general reading public of the United States for its want of appreciation of that gentleman's works. His article was so inaccurate and ill-tempered that he was quickly driven to the wall and compelled to retract the greater part of it. To his credit, however, it must be said that he made his practice much better than his preaching, for he sent Mr. Whitman a present of one hundred dollars.

A uniform revised edition of Buchanan's poems, in three volumes, was published in 1874, and republished in Boston. But his revising process seems to have been rather capricious, as he rejects several of the finest poems that appeared in his previous volumes.

A LONDON IDYL.

Hey, rain, rain, rain!
It patters down the glass and on the sill,
And splashes underneath, along the lane,—
  Then gives a kind of scream, and lies quite still:
  One likes to hear it, though, when one is ill:
'Rain, rain, rain, rain!
  Hey, how it pours and pours!
Rain, rain, rain, rain!—
  A weary day for poor girls out-o'-doors!

Ah, don't! that kind of comfort makes me cry,
And, Parson, since I 'm bad, I want to die.
  The roaring of the street,
  The tramp, tramp, tramp, of feet,
The sobbing,—sobbing of the weary Rain,
Have gone into the aching of my brain.
I 'm lost and weak, and can no longer bear
To wander like a shadow here and there,—
  As useless as a stone,—tired out,—and sick!
  So that they put me down to slumber quick,
It does not matter where.
No one will miss me; all will hurry by,
  And never cast a thought on one so low;
  Find gentles miss fine ladies when they go,
But folk care naught for such a thing as I.

'T is bad, I know, to talk like that,—too bad!
  Joe, though he 's often hard, is strong and true—
  (Ah, Joe meant well!) and there 's the Baby, too!—
But I 'm so tired and sad.
I 'm glad it was a boy, sir, very glad.
A man can fight along, can say his say,
  Is not looked down upon, holds up his head,
  And at a push can always earn his bread;
Men have the best of it, in many a way.
But ah! it is hard indeed for girls to keep
  Decent and honest, tramping in the town,
  Their best but bad,—made light of,—beaten down,—
Forever wearying, wearying, for sleep.
If they grow hard, go wrong, from bad to badder,
  Why, Parson dear, they 're happier being blind:

Digitized by Google

They get no thanks for being good and kind—
The better that they are, they feel the sadder!

Nineteen! nineteen!
Only nineteen, and yet so old, so old;—
I feel like fifty, Parson,—I have been
So wicked, I suppose, and life 's so cold!
Ah, cruel are the wind and rain and snow,
And I 've been out for years among them all:
I scarce remember being weak and small
Like Baby there,—it was so long ago.
It does not seem that I was born, but woke
One day in a dark room
High up among the smoke,
And trembled at the roaring of the gloom
That hung around me (for you could not see
The people from our window,—only stone,—
Deep walls, black pits, and lanes,—though drearily
You heard the deep streets groan;)
And I was all alone, and looking out,
And listening in a dream;
And far between the housetops was a gleam
Of water winding silver-like about.

That was the River. It looked cool and deep,
And as I watched, I felt it slipping past,
As if it smoothly swept along in sleep,
Gleaming and gliding fast;
And so I leaned upon the sill and hearkened
To the strange hum, while all the roofs became
Covered with thin sick flame,
And with a dusky thrill the River darkened;
Till coldly, coldly, on the roofs there lightened
A pale sad silver light from heaven shed,
And with a sweep that made me sick and frightened
The yellow moon rolled up above my head;
And down below me groaned the noise and trade,
And oh! I felt alive, and was afraid,
And cold, and hungry, shrieking out for bread.

All that is like a dream! It don't seem *true!*—
Father was dead and mother left, you see,
To work for little brother Ned and me,
And up among the roofs we grew and grew;
Locked in whole days high up, while mother chared
In people's houses; only now and then
We slipped away into the streets, and stared
At the big crowds of women and of men.
And I was six, but Ned was only three,
And thin and weak and weary; and one day,
While mother was away,
He put his little head upon my knee,
And went to sleep, and would not stir a limb,
But looked quite strange and old,
For when I touched him, shook him, spoke to him,
He smiled and grew so cold;
Then I was frightened and cried out, and none
Could hear me, and I sat and nursed his head,
Watching the smoky window while the sun
Peeped in upon his face and made it red;
And I began to cry;—till mother came,
Knelt down and screamed, and named the good God's name,
And told me he was dead.
Well, when she put his night-gown on and weeping
Put him among the rags upon his bed,
I thought that brother Ned was only sleeping,
And took his little hand and felt no fear;
But, when the place grew gray and cold and drear,
And the round moon came creeping, creeping, creeping,
Over the roofs and put a silver shade
All round the cold, cold bed where he was laid,
I sobbed and was afraid.

Ah, yes, it 's like a dream!—for time passed by,
And I went out into the smoky air,
Fruit-selling, Parson,—trudging wet or dry,—
Winter and summer,—weary, cold, and bare;
And when old mother laid her down to die,
And parish buried her, I did not cry,
And hardly seemed to care;
I was too hungry and too dull; beside,
The roar o' streets had made me dry as dust:
It took me all my time, howe'er I tried,
To keep my limbs alive and earn a crust;
I had no time for weeping,
And when I was not out amid the roar,
Or standing frozen at the play-house door,
Why, I was coiled upon my straw, and sleeping.
Ah, pence were hard to gain!
Some girls were pretty, too, but I was plain:
Fine ladies never stopped and looked and smiled,
And gave me money for my face's sake.
That made me hard and angry when a child,
But now it thrills my heart and makes it ache!
The pretty ones, poor things, what could they do,
Fighting and starving in the wicked town,
But go from bad to badder,—down, down, down,—
Being so poor and yet so pretty too?
Never could bear the like of that,—ah no!
Better have starved outright than gone so low!
For often late at night
A face that I had known when mild and meek
Passed by with fearful smile and painted cheek,
Gleamed in the gas, and faded out of sight.

But I've no call to boast. I might have been
As wicked, Parson dear, in my distress,
But for your friend,—you know the one I mean?—
The tall pale lady in the mourning dress.
Though we were cold at first, that wore away,—
She was so mild and young,
And had so soft a tongue,
And eyes to sweeten what she loved to say.
She never seemed to scorn one, no, not she,
And (what was best) she seemed as sad as me!
Not one of those that make a girl feel base,
And call her names, and talk of her disgrace,
And frighten one with thoughts of flaming hell
And fierce Lord God with black and angry brow,
But soft and mild, and sensible as well,
And oh I loved her, and I love her now.
She did me good for many and many a day,—
More good than pence could ever do, I swear,
For she was poor, with little pence to spare,—
Learned me to read and quit low words,—and pray.
And, Parson, though I never understood
How such a life as mine was meant for good,
And could not understand
How one she said was wicked, ever could

Digitized by Google

Go to your better land
Among a troop so grand,
I liked to hear her talk of such a place,
And thought of all the angels she was best,
Because her soft voice soothed me, and her face
Made my words gentle, put my heart at rest.

Ah! sir, 't was very lonesome. Night and day,
Save when the sweet Miss came, I was alone;
Moved on and hunted through the streets of stone,
And even in dreams afraid to rest or stay.
Then, other girls had lads to work and strive for,
I envied them, and did not know 't was wrong,
And often, very often, used to long
For some one I could like and keep alive for.
Marry? Not they!
They can't afford to be so good, you know;
But many of them, though they step astray,
Indeed don't mean to sin so much, or go
Against what 's decent. Only 't is their way.
And many might do worse than that, may be,
If they had ne'er a one to fill a thought,—
It sounds half wicked, but poor girls like me
Must sin a little, to be good in aught.

So I was glad when I began to see
That costermongering Joe had fancied me;
And when, one night, he took me to the play
Over on Surrey side, and offered fair;
That we should take a little room and share
Our earnings, why, I could not answer "nay!"
And that 's a year ago; and though I 'm bad,
I 've been as true to Joe as girl could be;
I don't complain a bit of Joe, dear lad,
Joe never, never meant but well; and we
Have had as fresh and fair a time, I think,
As one could hope, since we are both so low:
Joe likes me, never gave me push or blow,
When sober: only, he was wild in drink.
But then, we don't mind beating when a man
Is angry, if he likes us and keeps straight;
Works for his bread and does the best he can;—
'T is being left and slighted that we hate.

And so the Baby's come, and I shall die!
And though 't is hard to leave poor Baby here,
Where folk will think him bad, and all 's so drear,
The great Lord God knows better far than I.
Ah, don't!—'t is kindly, but it pains me so!
You say I 'm wicked, and I want to go!
"God's kingdom," Parson, dear? Ah nay, ah nay!
That must be like the country,—which I fear:
I saw the country once, one summer day,
And I would rather die in London here.

For I was sick of hunger, cold, and strife,
And took a sudden fancy in my head
To try the country, and to earn my bread
Out among fields, where, I had heard, one's life
Was easier and brighter. So, that day,
I took my basket up and stole away,
Early at morning. As I went along,
Trembling and loath to leave the busy place,
I felt that I was doing something wrong,
And feared to look policemen in the face.
And all was dim: the streets were gray and wet
After a rainy night: and all was still;
I held my shawl around me with a chill,
And dropped my eyes from every face I met;
Until the streets began to fade, the road
Grew fresh and clean and wide,
Fine houses where the gentlefolk abode,
And gardens full of flowers, on every side:
That made me walk the quicker,—on, on, on,—
As if I were asleep with half-shut eyes,
And all at once I saw to my surprise
The houses of the gentlefolk were gone,
And I was standing still,
Shading my face, upon a high green hill,
And the bright sun was blazing,
And all the blue above me seemed to melt
To burning flashing gold, while I was gazing
On the great smoky cloud where I had dwelt.

I 'll never forget that day. All was so bright
And strange. Upon the grass around my feet
The rain had hung a million drops of light;
The air, too, was so clear and warm and sweet
It seemed a sin to breathe it. All around
Were hills and fields and trees that trembled through
A burning blazing fire of gold and blue,
And there was not a sound,
Save a bird singing, singing, and a kind
Of sighing from the grass upon the ground.
I turned away, like one grown deaf and blind.
Then, with my heavy hand upon my chest,
Because the bright air pained me, trembling, sighing,
I stole into a dewy field to rest,
And oh the green green grass where I was lying
Was fresh and living,—and the bird sang loud,
Out of a golden cloud,—
And I was looking up at him and crying!

The hours they slipped away; and by-and-by
The sun grew red, big shadows filled the sky,
The air grew damp with dew,
And the dark night was coming down, I knew.
Well, I was more afraid than ever then,
And felt that I should die in such a place;—
So back to London town I turned my face,
And crept into the great black streets again;
And when I breathed the smoke and heard the roar,
Why, I was better, for in London here
My heart was busy, and I felt no fear.
I never saw the country any more.
And I have stayed in London well or ill,
I dared not stay out yonder if I could,
For one feels dead, and all looks pure and good,—
I could not bear a life so bright and still.
All that I want is sleep,
Under the flags and stones, so deep, so deep!
God won't be hard on one so mean, but He
Perhaps will let a tired girl slumber sound
There in the deep cool darkness underground;
And I shall waken up in time, may be,
Better and stronger, not afraid to see
The great still Light that folds Him round and round!

Digitized by Google

See! there 's a bit of sunshine through the pane,—
How cool and moist it looks amid the rain!
I like to hear the splashing of the drops
On the house-tops,
And the loud humming of the folk that go
Along the streets below!
I like the smoke and roar,—I am so bad,—
They make a low one hard and still her cares . . .
There 's Joe! I hear his foot upon the stairs!—
He must be wet, poor lad!
He will be angry, like enough, to find
Another little life to clothe and keep,
But show him Baby, Parson,—speak him kind,—
And tell him Doctor thinks I 'm going to sleep.
A hard hard life is his,—he need be strong
And rough, to earn his bread and get along;—
I think he will be sorry when I go,
And leave the little one and him behind.
I hope he 'll see another to his mind
To keep him straight and tidy. Poor old Joe!

LANGLEY LANE.

In all the land, range up, range down,
Is there ever a place so pleasant and sweet,
As Langley Lane in London town,
Just out of the bustle of square and street?
Little white cottages all in a row,
Gardens where bachelors'-buttons grow,
Swallows' nests in roof and wall,
And up above the still blue sky
Where the woolly white clouds go sailing by,—
I seem to be able to see it all!

For now, in summer, I take my chair,
And sit outside in the sun, and hear
The distant murmur of street and square,
And the swallows and sparrows chirping near;
And Fanny, who lives just over the way,
Comes running many a time each day
With her little hand's touch so warm and kind,
And I smile and talk, with the sun on my cheek,
And the little live hand seems to stir and speak,—
For Fanny is dumb and I am blind.

Fanny is sweet thirteen, and she
Has fine black ringlets and dark eyes clear,
And I am older by summers three,—
Why should we hold one another so dear?
Because she cannot utter a word,
Nor hear the music of bee or bird,
The water-cart's splash or the milkman's call!
Because I have never seen the sky,
Nor the little singers that hum and fly,—
Yet know she is gazing upon them all!

For the sun is shining, the swallows fly,
The bees and the blue-flies murmur low,
And I hear the water-cart go by,
With its cool splash-splash down the dusty row;
And the little one close at my side perceives
Mine eyes upraised to the cottage-eaves,
Where birds are chirping in summer shine,
And I hear, though I cannot look, and she,
Though she cannot hear, can the singers see,
And the little soft fingers flutter in mine!

Hath not the dear little hand a tongue,
When it stirs on my palm for the love of me?
Do I not know she is pretty and young?
Hath not my soul an eye to see?—
'T is pleasure to make one's bosom stir,
To wonder how things appear to her,
That I only hear as they pass around;
And as long as we sit in the music and light,
She is happy to keep God's sight,
And *I* am happy to keep God's sound.

Why, I know her face, though I am blind,—
I made it of music long ago:
Strange large eyes and dark hair twined
Round the pensive light of a brow of snow;
And when I sit by my little one,
And hold her hand and talk in the sun,
And hear the music that haunts the place,
I know she is raising her eyes to me,
And guessing how gentle my voice must be,
And *seeing* the music upon my face.

Though, if ever the Lord should grant me a prayer
(I know the fancy is only vain),
I should pray; just once, when the weather is fair,
To see little Fanny and Langley Lane;
Though Fanny, perhaps, would pray to hear
The voice of the friend that she holds so dear,
The song of the birds, the hum of the street,—
It is better to be as we have been,—
Each keeping up something, unheard, unseen,
To make God's heaven more strange and sweet!

Ah! life is pleasant in Langley Lane!
There is always something sweet to hear!
Chirping of birds or patter of rain!
And Fanny, my little one, always near!
And though I am weakly and can't live long,
And Fanny my darling is far from strong,
And though we can never married be,—
What then?—since we hold one another so dear,
For the sake of the pleasure one cannot hear,
And the pleasure that only one can see?

THE OLD POLITICIAN.

Now that Tom Dunstan's cold,
Our shop is duller;
Scarce a story is told!
And our chat has lost the old
Red-republican color!
Though he was sickly and thin,
He gladdened us with his face—
How, warming at rich man's sin,
With bang of the fist, and chin
Thrust out, he argued the case!
He prophesied folk should be free,
And the money-bags be bled—
"She 's coming, she 's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom 's ahead!"

Digitized by Google

All day we sat in the heat,
  Like spiders spinning,
Stitching full fine and fleet,
While the old Jew on his seat
  Sat greasily grinning:
And there Tom said his say,
  And prophesied Tyranny's death,
And the tallow burnt all day,
And we stitched and stitched away
  In the thick smoke of our breath,
Wearily, wearily,
  With hearts as heavy as lead—
But "Patience, she's coming!" said he:
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
  Freedom's ahead!"

And at night, when we took here
  The pause allowed to us,
The paper came with the beer,
And Tom read, sharp and clear,
  The news out loud to us;
And then, in his witty way,
  He threw the jest about—
The cutting things he'd say
Of the wealthy and gay!
  How he turned them inside out!
And it made our breath more free
  To hearken to what he said—
"She's coming, she's coming!" says he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
  Freedom's ahead!"

But grim Jack Hart, with a sneer,
  Would mutter, "Master!
If Freedom means to appear,
I think she might step here
  A little faster?"
Then it was fine to see Tom flame,
  And argue and prove and preach,
Till Jack was silent for shame,
Or a fit of coughing came
  O' sudden to spoil Tom's speech.
Ah! Tom had the eyes to see,
  When Tyranny should be sped;
"She's coming, she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
  Freedom's ahead!"

But Tom was little and weak,
  The hard hours shook him;
Hollower grew his cheek,
And when he began to speak
  The coughing took him.
Ere long the cheery sound
  Of his chat among us ceased,
And we made a purse all round,
  That he might not starve, at least;
His pain was sorry to see,
  Yet there, on his poor sick-bed,
"She's coming, in spite of me!
Courage, and wait!" cried he,
  "Freedom's ahead!"

A little before he died,
  To see his passion!
"Bring me a paper!" he cried,
And then to study it tried
  In his old sharp fashion;
And with eyeballs glittering
  His look on me he bent,
And said that savage thing
  Of the lords of the Parliament.
Then, darkening, smiling on me,
  "What matter if one be dead?
She's coming, at least!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
  Freedom's ahead!"

Ay, now Tom Dunstan's cold,
  The shop feels duller;
Scarce a story is told!
Our talk has lost the old
  Red-republican color.
But we see a figure gray,
  And we hear a voice of death,
And the tallow burns all day,
And we stitch and stitch away,
  In the thick smoke of our breath;
Ay, here in the dark sit we,
While wearily, wearily,
  We hear him call from the dead—
"She's coming, she's coming!" said he;
  "Freedom's ahead!"

How long, O Lord, how long
  Doth thy handmaid linger?
She who shall right the wrong?
Make the oppressed strong?—
  Sweet morrow, bring her!
Hasten her over the sea,
  O Lord, ere hope be fled—
Bring her to men and to me!
O slave, pray still on thy knee—
  "Freedom's ahead!"

A LONDON LYRIC.

The wind is shrill on the hills, and the culver
  Wheels up and down with a windy gleam;
The birch has unloosened her locks of silver,
  And shaken them down on the pools of the stream;
Yet here I linger in London city,
  Thinking of meadows where I was born—
And over the tiles, with her haunting pity,
  Glimmers the moon, with her dripping horn.

O Moon, pale siren, with wild eyes drinking
  The light of the sun as he sweepeth by,
I am looking straight in those eyes, and thinking
  Of one who has loved you longer than I;
I am asking my heart if you pity or cherish
  The souls that you witch with a harvest-call—
If the dream must die when the dreamer perish—
  If it be idle to dream at all.

The waves of the city roll hither and thither,
  The tumult deepens, the days go by,
The dead men vanish—we know not whither,
  The live men anguish—we know not why;
The cry of the stricken is smothered never,
  The shadow passes from street to street,
And overhead, for ever and ever,
  Goes the still white gleam of thy constant feet.

The hard men struggle, the students ponder,
  The world rolls round on its westward way,

Digitized by Google

The gleam of thy beautiful night up yonder
  Is pale on the dreamer's cheek all day;
The old earth's voice is a sound of weeping,
  All round her shores the waters cry;
There is no calm and there is no sleeping,
  But thy still white presence goes nightly by.

Another summer, new hopes departed,
  Yet here we are lingering, you and I,
I on the earth, with my hope proud-hearted,
  You, through the silence of stars, in the sky!
You are there! I am here! and the reaping and sowing
  Of the year of harvest is over and done,
And the hoary snow-drift will soon be blowing
  Under the wheels of the whirling sun.

White tower and turret lie silvered under,
  When eyes are closed and the lips are dumb,
In the nightly pause of the human wonder,
  From dusky portals, I see thee come;
And whoso wakes, and beholds thee yonder,
  Is witched by thee till his days shall cease;
For over his eyes, wheresoever he wander,
  Dwelleth the vision of God's white peace!

CHARMIAN.

In the time when yellow lilies shake
Their dusty gold on river and lake,
When the cuckoo calls in the heart o' the heat,
When the dog-star foams and the shade is sweet,
Where cool and fresh the river ran,
I sat by the side of thee, Charmian,
And heard no sound from the world of man.

All was so sweet and still that day!
The rustling shade, the rippling stream,
All life, all breath dissolved away
Into a golden dream;
Warm and sweet the scented shade
Drowsily caught the breeze and stirred,
Faint and low through the green glade
Came hum of bee and song of bird;
Our hearts were full of drowsy bliss
And yet we did not clasp nor kiss,
Nor did we break the happy spell
With tender tone nor syllable.
But to ease our hearts and set thought free,
We plucked the flowers of a red-rose tree.
And leaf by leaf we threw them, sweet,
Unto the river at our feet,
And in an indolent delight,
Watched them glide onward, out of sight.

Oh, had I spoken boldly then,
How might my love have gathered thee!
But I had left the world of men,
And sitting yonder dreamily
Was happiness enough for me;
Seeking no gift of word or kiss,
But looking into thy face, was bliss;
Plucking the rose-leaves in a dream,
Watching them glimmer down the stream,
Knowing that Eastern heart of thine
Shared the dim ecstasy of mine!

Then, while we lingered, cold and gray
Came twilight, chilling soul and sense;
And you arose to go away,
Full of sweet indifference!
I missed the spell—I watched it break—
And such come never twice to man:
In a less golden hour I spake,
And did not win thee, Charmian!

For wearily we turned away
Into the world of everyday,
And from thy heart the sweetness fled
Like the rose-leaves on the river shed;
But to me that hour is sweeter far
Than the world and all its treasures are:
Still to sit on, so close to thee,
Were happiness enough for me!
Still to sit in that green nook,
Nor break the spell by word or look,
To reach out happy hands forever,
To pluck the rose-leaves, Charmian!
To watch them fade on the golden river,
And hear no sound from the world of man.

THE BROOK.

Oh, sweet and still around the hill
  Thy silver waters, Brook, are creeping;
Beneath the hill as sweet and still
  Thy weary friend lies sleeping.
A laurel-leaf is in his hair,
  His eyes are closed to human seeming,
And surely he has dreams most fair
  If he indeed be dreaming.

O Brook, he smiled, a happy child,
  Upon thy banks, and loved thy crying,
And, as time flew, thy murmur grew,
  A trouble purifying;
Till, last, thy laurel-leaf he took,
  Dream-eyed and tearful, like a woman,
And turned thy haunting cry, O Brook,
  To speech divine and human.

O Brook! in song full sweet and strong
  He sang of thee he loved so dearly;
Then softly creep around his sleep,
  And murmur to him cheerly;
For though he knows nor fret nor fear,
  Though life no more slips strangely through him,
Yet he may sleep more sound to hear
  His friend so close unto him.

And when at last the sleepers cast
  Their swathes aside, and, wandering, waken,
Let thy friend be full tenderlie
  In silver arms uptaken.
Him be it then thy task to bear
  Up to the Footstool, softly flowing—
Smiles on his eyes, and in his hair
  Thy leaf of laurel blowing.

Digitized by Google

JOHN PAYNE.

JOHN PAYNE was born in 1843. He has published "The Masque of Shadows, and other Poems," 1870; "Intaglios: Sonnets," 1871; and "Songs of Life and Death," 1872. To the three volumes he gives the collective title, "The House of Dreams." These poems have met with a most enthusiastic reception from the British critics.

IN ARMIDA'S GARDEN.

(GLUCK'S "ARMIDE," ACT II., SCENE 3.)

THIS is the land of dreams: these waving woods
And the dim sunlight haze that hangs on all,
And the clear jewels of the murmuring stream;
These flowered nooks through which the bird-notes fall,
Like silver spring-showers—here sweet Silence broods,
And here I dream.

Prone in the shadow of the flowers I lie,
And watch the lizards glitter through the grass,
And listen to the tinkle of the stream:
Unmindful of the weary hours that pass,
Here do I lie and let the years go by:
I dream and I dream.

Life and the world forsake me in the calm
Of these enchanted woodways, green and still,
Wherein the very sunlight's wavering gleam
Sleeps on the lazy ripples of the rill,
And in the mist of the drooped flowers' faint balm
I dream and I dream.

There is no future in these glades of ours,
Nor any whisper of the stern to-morrow;
Life is a woven thing of a sunbeam:
Nor in the grass is any snake of sorrow,
Nor comes remorse anigh where 'mid the flowers
I dream and I dream.

Here are the bird-songs neither glad nor sad—
Sleep drones in every note of their delight;
Not even throstles with the olden theme
Of tender grieving sadden the pale night;
But veiled is all their song, as 'twere they had
Dream within dream.

Here are no roses of the sharp sweet scent,
Nor the sad violets' enchanted breath,
Nor jasmines cluster by the slumbering stream;
But the drowsed hyacinths with umbels bent,
And the gold-hearted lilies of sweet death,
Flowers of a dream.

I know not if life is with me, or how
I come to lie and sleep away the years:
I only know, but yesterday did seem
Sad life amid a swarm of sordid fears
And hopes. Then came the god of Sleep—and now
I dream and I dream.

There swell faint breaths to me of earthly jar,
As 'twere a wild-bee humming in the thyme,
And the dim sounds of what pale mortals deem
The aims of life come back like olden rhyme
Upon my ears, while from the world afar
I dream and I dream.

I hear the sweep of pinions in the air,
And see dim glories glitter through the skies,
As if some angel from the blue extreme
Of heaven strewed gold and balm of memories
Upon the woods and the dim flowers that bear
Spells of a dream.

There hover faces o'er me oftentimes
Of lovely women that I knew of old,
Set like a jewel in a golden stream
Of fairest locks; and from the aureoled
Sweet lips there swell faint echoes of old rhymes;
(*I dream and I dream.*)

And sweet white arms enclose me as I lie,
(Still do I lie and fold me in a sleep)
And the soft fluttering tresses, all a-gleam,
Fall down about my brow full tenderly,
And wind me in a glamour soft and deep.
(*I dream and I dream.*)

Digitized by Google

Yet is there nothing that therein is rife,
That for the world forsaken makes me sigh,
Being but the empty motes of a sunbeam:
Unheeding them, in the dim dream I lie;
Far from the flutter of the wings of Life,
I dream and I dream.

When wraiths of pleasure are so true and leal,
Why should I seek for flesh and blood to love me?
Who shall tell what things are, and what things seem?
I am content, unquestioning, to feel
The folding of the shadow-arms above me.
I dream and I dream.

There are two shapes that reign in the clear air,
Filling the hours with their alternate feet:
Under the lindens and along the stream
The twin shapes walk and make the noonday sweet
With their clear songs and their aspect most fair:
(*I dream and I dream.*)

The one of them is white and locked with gold,
And the sea's blue is cloudless in his eyes;
And therein comes and goes the glad sun's beam,
When in the morn the sloping shadow lies
Of his fair form upon the golden wold:
(*I dream and I dream.*)

But dark the other is, and sad as night,
And his eyes purple as the evening sky,
When in the midnight falls the silver stream
Of the pale moon upon the flowers that lie
And faint with the excess of their delight:
(*I dream and I dream.*)

The fair shape's songs are joyous as the day;
The other's sad as is the violet's breath;
And of their lovely semblance, this I deem,
Life is the name of him that is so gay;
The name men know the other by is Death:
(*I dream and I dream.*)

The fair shape holds the day for his demesne,
And wakes the linnets with his golden song,
Clear as the jewelled tinkle of the stream;
The dark shape walks the cloistered night along,
And weaves descants of a divine sweet pain.
(*I dream and I dream.*)

But in the middle day the twain do meet,
And hand in hand right lovingly they go
Along the flowered marges of the stream,
Mingling their songs in a sweet chant and low;
And where the grass is pressed by their twin feet,
I dream and I dream.

Nor are these all that haunt the wooded bowers:
There is another shape much sought of them,
That something of the twain to have doth seem;
For there is life in his sweet eyes' blue gem,
And death upon his tender mouth's red flowers.
(*I dream and I dream.*)

Walking alone, along the wood he goes,
And plucks the flowers to breathe their scent and tell
The issue of the things that he doth deem,
And idles with the ripple's babbling swell,
Murmuring sweet ditties that he only knows.
(*I dream and I dream.*)

Him do the twin shapes seek by hill and wood,
He flying ever with an arch despite,
Along the tangled borders of the stream;
And when upon the fringe of the spent night
The broidery of morning is renewed,
(*I dream and I dream.*)

They touch him often; yet but seldom win
To make him walk with them the path beside
Along the woodways in the noontide gleam;
And often joyous Life hath grieving sighed,
And Death hath sorrowing sat beside the linn,
(*I dream and I dream.*)

For that he would not come: but, comes the wight,
Then do they crown him, as their lord above
The twain, with laurels and a diadem
Woven out of sungold and the moon's delight;
And so I know that the fair shape is Love.
(*I dream and I dream.*)

These all are but the figures of a sleep,
Being too fair for aught but the dream-world,
Being too lovely to do aught but seem;
And so I will to lie, and them to reap:
In these dim hazes of the night impearled,
I dream and I dream.

Come Death—it is but night more sweet and deep;
Come Life—it is but morning come again;
Come Love—it is but the first spring's sun-gleam,
With the sweet primrose-scents of rapturous pain;
For Love, Life, Death, are but the terms of sleep.
I dream and I dream.

A FAREWELL.

To part in midmost summer of our love,
When first the flower-scents and the linnet's tune
Have fallen into harmonies of June
About our lives new linked, and all above
The flower-blue heaven lies for bliss aswoon,
Were this not sad? Yet love must live by pain,
If one would win its fragrance to remain.

Were it not sadder, in the years to come,
To feel the hand-clasp slacken for long use,
The untuned heart-strings for long stress refuse

Digitized by Google

To yield old harmonies, the songs grow dumb
For weariness, and all the old spells lose
The first enchantment? Yet this thing must be.
Love is but mortal, save in memory.

Too rare a flower it is, its bloom to keep
In the raw cold of our unlovely clime,
Too frail to thrive in this our weary time.
I would not have thy kisses, sweet, grow cheap,
Nor thy dear looks round out an idle rhyme,
And so I hold that we loose hands and part;
Dear, with my hand you do not lose my heart.

Sweet is the fragrance of remembered love;
The memory of clasped hands is very sweet,
Joined lips that did not once too often meet,
And never knew that saddest word "Enough!"
And so 't is well that, ere our spring-time fleet,
Thus in the heyday of our love part we:
Farewell, and all white omens go with thee!

Is it not well that we should both retain
The early bloom of love, untouched and pure?
There is no way by which it may endure,
Save if we part before its sweetness wane
And wither; since that life is so impure,
And love so frail, it may not blossom long,
Unscathed, amid our stress of care and wrong.

We were not sure of love, my sweet, and yet
The fragrance of its spring shall never die.
Sweetheart, we shall be sure of memory,
That amber of the years, where Time doth set
The dear-belovèd shapes of things gone by,
Whereby their gentle semblance may evade
The ills that lurk in eld's ungenial shade.

So, sweet, our love shall, in the death of it,
Revive, as corn that withers in the ground,
And somewhile after casts fresh blades around
And yields full golden sheavage, as is fit.
It may be that new flowers will too be found
Among the stubble, and the pale sweet blooms
Of autumn glorify our woodland glooms.

The memory of our kisses shall survive,
And in the glass of time be consecrate.
Our love shall with the distance grow more great,
And shall for us be sweeter than alive,
When dead; for memory shall reduplicate
The sweetness of the past, till you and I
Cherish as angels' food each bygone sigh.

THE HOUSE OF SORROW.

There is a story, told with many a rhyme
In dusty tomes of old,
Of how folk sailed, in the fresh ancient time,
Into the sunset's gold—

Into the land of western hope they sailed,
To seek the soul of joy,
That from the modern life of men had failed,
Crushed by the dull annoy

Of pain and toil; the gladness of the age,
When Love was king on earth,
And summer, midmost in the winter's rage,
In men's warm hearts had birth:

This did they seek. Beyond the sun, they thought,
Deep in the purple West,
There lay the charm of joyance that they sought,
Awaiting some high quest:

Charm to be won by earnest souls and pure,
And brought anew to life;
Wherewith provided, one might hope to cure
Men's endless dole and strife.

So from the chains of love and toil and gold,
The love of wife and maid,
All human ties had they cast loose, unrolled
The fluttering sails, and weighed

Swift anchor, steering toward the dying day,
Hope in their hearts most high
That they should win the charm that therein lay
For men's sake, ere to die

The angel bade them. And the high heart fell
Not in them, though the wind
Blew fresh and swift for many a day, the swell
Ran pearled the keel behind,

Along the emerald, and the golden dawn
Sank ever sad and pale
Into the westward and was gone,
Whenas the dew did fail;

And nothing met their vision, save the streaks
Of gold and crimson, wound
About the westward, when the dead day's cheeks
Flushed with the sun, that drowned

His glory sullenly in amber foam;
And the dim mists that lay
Along the sapphire marges of the dome
Of heaven, in the gray

Of the pale dawning; and the narrowing wheel
Of sea-birds round the sail,
And silver fish that played about the keel,
With many a golden scale

And fin of turquoise glancing through the spray:
But never the fair line
Of green and golden shores, the long array
Of palaces divine

That held the dream of their long venturings,
Rose in the changeful West;
But still the ship sped with its silver wings
Over the fretted crest

Of the slow ripple; still the sea was green
And calm on every side,
And the swift course unto their vision keen
Brought but the weary wide

Gray circle bounded by the silver foam;
And still they looked and hoped
For the fair land where the true joy had home
Wherefore they sighed and groped

Digitized by Google

Amid the mirk of living. Ever pale
And paler grew the skies,
And less refulgent in its crimson mail
The hour when the day dies:

And every day the dawn was tenderer
And sadder in its white
And rosy pudency; and still the stir
Of the sad winds of night

Crept closelier on the noontide, till the day
Was hardly much more glad
Than the pale night; and morning was as gray
As when the hours are sad

With stormy twilight. So at last they came—
Whenas the purple flame
Of dying daylight slept upon the crest
Of sea, that in the West

Swept to the sunward, as it were to catch
The day's last fluttering sigh—
In sight of a fair city, that did match
The tender amethyst sky,

Pale purple with the setting. Very fair
And lucent were the walls;
And in the evening of the enchanted hair
Of some pale star, that falls,

From azure heights of mystery, did seem
To compass it about
And wrap it round with glamours of a dream,
Golden sad webs of doubt:

So that for those sweet clinging veils of mist,
Amber and vaporous,
One could but faintly note the amethyst
And jewels of the house

That rose with many a stately battlement
Out of the pulsing sea,
And could but dimly trace the forms that went,
Most fair and sad to see,

About the silver highways and the quays
Of gold and chrysoprase,
Tender and lovely as the shapes one sees,
In some sweet autumn haze,

Flit, in the gloaming, through the enchanted air
When there is none to know,
Save some pale poet, that may never dare
To tell the lovely woe,

The tender ecstasy of sad delight
He has seen pictured there,
Upon the canvas of the pale twilight,
Under the evening air.

But they that sailed in that enchanted ship,
No whit cast down, drew sail
And came to where the amber-polished lip
Of the gold shore grew pale

Under the kisses of the purpled sea:
And there they landed all;
And wandering inward through the blazonry
Of portico and hall,

They came to where the soul of sadness sat,
Throned in a woman's form—
Most holy and most lovely—and forgat
In her sweet eyes the worm

Of yearning that had gnawed their heart so long,
And knew at last,
From her low whispers and the sad sea's song,
That thither had Life past

As to its goal-point: for the golden thing
That they had lacked on earth
Was not (as they had deemed) the god rose-wing
Of gladness and of mirth—

The god of vine-and-ivy trellised brow
And sunny Orient eyes—
For he did haunt men ever, did they know
But to be linnet-wise:

But that best gift of the Immortal Ones,
That men have lost for aye;
The pure sweet sadness that we know but once,
And then we come to die.

The mingled love and pain we Sorrow call,
There did it dwell alone,
The tender godlike pain once known to all,
Now but to poets known.

There sit they through the long, unwearying years,
At that fair lady's knees,
Lulled by the ripple of her songs and tears,
And the sweet sighful breeze,

Into forgetting of the things of life
And the weird shapes that fleet
Across its stage of mingled dole and strife;
For sorrow is so sweet,

There is no gladness that may equal it,
Nor any charm of bliss.
And fain would I from the pale seekers wit
Which way the steering is

That may, with helm and sail and oar pursued,
Bring me where she doth dwell,
The lovely lady of that solitude.
Is there no one can tell?

Digitized by Google

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY was born in 1846. He has published "An Epic of Women, and other Poems," 1870; "Lays of France," 1872; and "Music and Moonlight," 1874. Like his friend Payne, he met with a handsome reception, and his first volume quickly reached a second edition. With Eleanor O'Shaughnessy he has edited books for children.

THE MUSIC-MAKERS.

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams;
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory;
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three, with a new song's measure,
Can trample a kingdom down.

We in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration
Is the life of each generation;
A wondrous thing of our dreaming,
Unearthly, impossible seeming—
The soldier, the king, and the peasant,
Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their Present,
And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they are raising,
They had no divine foreshowing
Of the land to which they are going;
But on one man's soul it hath broken,
A light that doth not depart,
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And, therefore, to-day is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
And the multitudes are enlisted
In the faith that their fathers resisted;
And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
Are bringing to pass as they may
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
The glory about us clinging
Of the glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing—
O men, it must ever be
That we dwell in our dreaming and singing
A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning,
And the suns that are not yet high;
And out of the infinite morning,
Intrepid, you hear us cry—
How, spite of your human scorning,
Once more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning,
That ye of the past must die.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
From the dazzling, unknown shore,
Bring us hither your sun and your summers,
And renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
And things that we dreamed not before;
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers
And a singer who sings no more.

MAY.

DREAM-LIKE glow of a rapt noon hour,
Rose-tinted rapture, that may not last,
Heaven seen clear between shower and shower,
Dawn color ruined by day's overcast—
How shall I sing of the maid called May?
How shall I sing of the year's supreme flower?
Fading away, ah! fading away,
Fading, fading away!

Digitized by Google

Maiden May was a white snow-bloom,
  A wan white lily wearily fair;
Summer her death was, and summer her doom;
  In love her garden, and love her air,
She grew and paled in the full red ray,
A lily that stood in the rose's room,
  Fading away, ah! fading away,
  Fading, fading away!

Her head was haloed with strange, sweet gold;
  Sadder than life is, and high as life's dream;
Her lifted face, lit manifold
  With the inner eyes' transcendent gleam,
Was like the fair lit face of a day
Filled with the azure it may not hold,
  Fading away, ah! fading away,
  Fading, fading away!

She walked one eve beneath the trees—
  Who may forget her slender grace?
Lingering, gliding with soft ease,
  Singing fair thoughts in that fair place,
Seeming at length, in mystic gray
The angel some fond dreamer sees,
  Fading away, ah! fading away,
  Fading, fading away!

No empress ever in all men's sight
  Moved with a loftier splendid look
Than May did, making summer bright,
  Till our sad summer she forsook;
Then a white saint it was that lay
Upon a couch all clad in white,
  Fading away, ah! fading away,
  Fading, fading away!

But how shall a song of mine avail
  To sing of the wondrous hidden soul,
That stronger grew as the form grew frail,
  Until it passed from the form's control?
She rose—the form is no longer May,
But a fair wan flower, fallen and pale,
  Fading away, yes, fading away,
  Fading, fading away!

PROPHETIC BIRDS.

On May-morn two lovers stood
For the first time in the wood;
And lip wooed lip, and heart wooed heart,
Till words must cease, and tears must start;
And overhead in the rustling green
The birds talked over their fate unseen.

"Sure," said the thrush, "we 'll wed them soon;"
"Yea," said the turtle-dove, "in June;"
"They 'll make fine sport ere the year is out,"
Said the magpie between a laugh and a shout.
And heedlessly the lovers heard
The senseless babble of bird with bird.

"Sure," croaked the jackdaw, "in July
They 'll quarrel, or no daw am I—
Why, let them, since they are but men;"
"They can make it up though," quoth the wren.
And heedlessly the lovers heard
A senseless babble of bird with bird.

"Love with them shall be sweet, ere sad,"
Said the goldfinch,—"August shall make them glad."
"Yea," said the oriole, "one rich noon
They shall lengthen love in a golden swoon."
And all this while the lovers heard
But a senseless babble of bird with bird.

"My news is from Prince Popinjay,"
Sighed the hoopoe. "Ah! one August day
They shall dream in the sunset, and fall asleep,
And one shall awake from the dream to weep."
And heedlessly the lovers heard
This senseless babble of bird with bird.

But a nightingale in a far-off shade
That moment silenced the chattering glade,
And sang like an angel from above
Some mystic song of eternal love.
And all this singing the lovers heard
As the senseless babble of bird with bird.

SONG OF BETROTHAL.

O sister-soul and lover,
  Mine to eternity,
Whom dreams and hopes discover
  Where dreamed-of-heavens may be!
Those nights the skies are glass,
  Those days the skies are blue,
Do you quite near me pass?
  Do I draw near to you?

Those days I listen vainly
  To sounds the skies let fall;
I never catch a word, and yet
  It seems I hear you call.
Those nights I see quite plainly,
  O sister-soul and lover!
My heaven through many a fair inlet,
  And you, who fill it all.

O sister-soul and lover,
  Mine to eternity,
Whom heart and thoughts discover
  In climes remote from me!
The south wind that brings summer,
  The amber-laden sea,
The bird, the rarest comer,
  Bring these no word from thee?

I think I see you under
  Strange palms with leaves of gold;
Your foreign dress, and in your hand
  The quaint bright fan you hold:
I sit sometimes and wonder,
  O sister mine, and lover,
What ship shall bring you from your land,
  To me here in the cold?

O lover mine and sister,
  That lady you must be
My soul once knew, then missed her
  A whole eternity.

Digitized by Google

My soul, still pining, fretting
  Feels all your memory;
O mine beyond forgetting,
  Canst thou remember me?

I think we sang together,
  Bright songs, whose words yet cling
Divinely to my lips, and quite
  Their music with them bring:
They tell of fairer weather,
  O lady mine, and lover;
I write them down, and as I write,
  I think I hear you sing.

O sister mine and lover,
  Buried and lost to me,
Whose grave my tears discover,
  Where'er thy grave may be;
Art buried where the grass is,
  And flowers that were like thee,
Where my foot sometimes passes?
  Or is your grave the sea?

Wherever you are sleeping,
  Indeed though o'er your head,
You see dark waves of dismal blue,
  And wet weed is your bed;
Oh, you must feel my weeping,
  Yea, sister mine and lover;
I will not take my love from you,
  Nor think that you are dead.

O angel bride and sister,
  My heart knows thou art she,
Whom lips that never kissed her
  Shall kiss eternally.
When heaven is quite a glass,
  And love sees through and through,
How shall sick longing pass,
  And my soul rush to you!

These shall not be forever,
  Days, nights, and darkness sore,
Drear time that seems a shoreless sea,
  And death that owns no shore;
Then what shall stay or sever,
  O angel love and sister,
Thy soul from mine or me from thee,
  My bride for evermore?

SONGS.

Has summer come without the rose,
  Or left the bird behind?
Is the blue changed above thee,
  O world! or am I blind?
Will you change every flower that grows,
  Or only change this spot,
Where she who said, I love thee,
  Now says, I love thee not?

The skies seemed true above thee,
  The rose true on the tree;
The bird seemed true the summer through,
  But all proved false to me.
World! is there one good thing in you,
  Life, love, or death—or what?
Since lips that sang, I love thee,
  Have said, I love thee not?

I think the sun's kiss scarce will fall
  Into one flower's gold cup;
I think the bird will miss me,
  And give the summer up.
O sweet place! desolate in tall
  Wild grass, have you forgot
How her lips loved to kiss me,
  Now that they kiss me not?

Be false or fair above me,
  Come back with any face,
Summer!—do I care what you do?
  You cannot change one place—
The grass, the leaves, the earth, the dew,
  The grave I make the spot—
Here, where she used to love me,
  Here, where she loves me not.

I went to her who loveth me no more,
  And prayed her bear with me, if so she might;
For I had found day after day too sore,
  And tears that would not cease night after night.
And so I prayed her, weeping, that she bore
To let me be with her a little; yea,
  To sooth myself a little with her sight,
Who loved me once, ah! many a night and day.

Then she who loveth me no more, maybe
  She pitied somewhat: and I took a chain
To bind myself to her, and her to me;
  Yea, so that I might call her mine again.
Lo! she forbade me not; but I and she
Fettered her fair limbs, and her neck more fair,
  Chained the fair wasted white of love's domain,
And put gold fetters on her golden hair.

Oh! the vain joy it is to see her lie
  Beside me once again; beyond release,
Her hair, her hand, her body, till she die,
  All mine, for me to do with as I please!
For, after all, I find no chain whereby
To chain her heart to love me as before,
  Nor fetter for her lips, to make them cease
From saying still she loveth me no more.

Now I am on the earth,
  What sweet things love me?
Summer, that gave me birth,
  And glows on still above me;
The bird I loved a little while;
  The rose I planted;
The woman in whose golden smile
  Life seems enchanted.

Now I am in the grave,
  What sweet things mourn me?
Summer, that all joys gave,
  Whence death, alas! hath torn me;
One bird that sang to me; one rose
  Whose beauty moved me;
One changeless woman; yea, all those
  That living loved me.

Digitized by Google

SINGLE FAMOUS POEMS.

British poetry owes a considerable debt to writers who have produced but a single poem, or but one which has survived the test of time. Some of these are anonymous; the names of others are kept green solely by their one happy song; and still others, noted in their day, enjoy a nominal fame which is supposed to rest on a mass of verses quietly stowed away in dusty corners of all respectable libraries. The following group is intended to be a selection from the best of these single poems, complementing the more extended selections that precede it.

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS.

My mind to me a kingdom is,
  Such perfect joy therein I find
As far exceeds all earthly bliss
  That God or nature hath assigned;
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

Content I live, this is my stay:
  I seek no more than may suffice:
I press to bear no haughty sway:
  Look, what I lack, my mind supplies.
Lo! thus I triumph like a king,
Content with what my mind doth bring.

I see how plenty surfeits oft,
  And hasty climbers soonest fall;
I see that such as sit aloft
  Mishap doth threaten most of all:
These get with toil and keep with fear;
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Some have too much, yet still they crave;
  I little have, yet seek no more;
They are but poor, though much they have,
  And I am rich with little store!
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I lend; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss,
  I grudge not at another's gain:
No worldly wave my mind can toss,
  I brook that is another's bane:
I fear no foe, nor fawn on friend;
I loathe not life, nor dread mine end.

I wish but what I have at will,
  I wander not to seek for more,
I like the plain, I climb no hill,
  In greatest storms I sit on shore,
And laugh at them that toil in vain,
To get what must be lost again.

My wealth is health and perfect ease,
  My conscience clear my chief defence;
I never seek by bribes to please,
  Nor by desert to give offence;
Thus do I live, thus will I die,
Would all did so as well as I.

William Byrd (1540–1623).

THE LYE.

Goe, soule, the bodie's guest,
  Upon a thanklesse arrant;
Feare not to touche the best—
  The truth shall be thy warrant!
    Goe, since I needs must dye,
    And give the world the lye.

Goe tell the court it glowes
  And shines like rotten wood;
Goe tell the church it showes
  What 's good, and doth no good;
    If church and court reply,
    Then give them both the lye.

Tell potentates they live
  Acting by others actions—
Not loved unlesse they give,
  Not strong but by their factions;
    If potentates reply,
    Give potentates the lye.

Tell men of high condition,
  That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition,
  Their practice only hate;
    And if they once reply,
    Then give them all the lye.

Tell them that brave it most
  They beg for more by spending,

Digitized by Google

Who in their greatest cost
  Seek nothing but commending;
    And if they make reply,
    Spare not to give the lye.

Tell zeale it lacks devotion;
  Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it is but motion;
  Tell flesh it is but dust;
    And wish them not reply,
    For thou must give the lye.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
  Tell honour how it alters;
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
  Tell favour how she falters;
    And as they then reply,
    Give each of them the lye.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
  In tickle points of nicenesse;
Tell wisdome she entangles
  Herselfe in over-wisenesse;
    And if they do reply,
    Straight give them both the lye.

Tell physicke of her boldnesse;
  Tell skill it is pretension;
Tell charity of coldnesse;
  Tell law it is contention;
    And as they yield reply,
    So give them still the lye.

Tell fortune of her blindnesse;
  Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindnesse:
  Tell justice of delay;
    And if they dare reply,
    Then give them all the lye.

Tell arts they have no soundnesse,
  But vary by esteeming;
Tell schooles they want profoundnesse,
  And stand too much on seeming;
    If arts and schooles reply,
    Give arts and schooles the lye.

Tell faith it 's fled the citie;
  Tell how the country erreth;
Tell, manhood shakes off pitie;
  Tell, vertue least preferreth;
    And if they doe reply,
    Spare not to give the lye.

So, when thou hast, as I
  Commanded thee, done blabbing—
Although to give the lye
  Deserves no less than stabbing—
    Yet stab at thee who will,
    No stab the soule can kill.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552–1618).

SONNET.

COME sleep, O sleep! The certain knot of peace,
  The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe;
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
  The indifferent judge between the high and low!
With shield of proof, shield me from out the prease
  Of those fierce darts despair doth at me throw.
Oh make in me those civil wars to cease;
  I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
  A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
  And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
  Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554–1586).

MAN'S MORTALITY.

LIKE as the damask rose you see,
Or like the blossoms on the tree,
Or like the dainty flower of May,
Or like the morning of the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade,
Or like the gourd which Jonas had;
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out and cut, and so is done.
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes, and man,—he dies!

Like to the grass that 's newly sprung,
Or like a tale that 's new begun,
Or like the bird that 's here to-day,
Or like the pearlèd dew of May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan;
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The grass withers, the tale is ended,
The bird is flown, the dew 's ascended,
The hour is short, the span not long,
The swan near death,—man's life is done!

Like to a bubble in the brook,
Or in a glass much like a look,
Or like a shuttle in a weaver's hand,
Or like the writing on the sand,
Or like a thought, or like a dream,
Or like the gliding of a stream;
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The bubble 's out, the look 's forgot,
The shuttle 's flung, the writing 's blot,
The thought is past, the dream is gone,
The water glides,—man's life is done!

Like to a blaze of fond delight,
Or like a morning clear and bright,
Or like a frost, or like a shower,
Or like the pride of Babel's tower,
Or like the hour that guides the time,
Or like to Beauty in her prime;
Even such is man, whose glory lends
That life a blaze or two, and ends.

Digitized by Google

The morn 's o'ercast, joy turned to pain,
The frost is thawed, dried up the rain,
The tower falls, the hour is run,
The beauty lost,—man's life is done!

Like to an arrow from the bow,
Or like swift course of water-flow,
Or like that time 'twixt flood and ebb,
Or like the spider's tender web,
Or like a race, or like a goal,
Or like the dealing of a dole;
Even such is man, whose brittle state
Is always subject unto Fate.
The arrow 's shot, the flood soon spent,
The time 's no time, the web soon rent,
The race soon run, the goal soon won,
The dole soon dealt,—man's life is done!

Like to the lightning from the sky,
Or like a post that quick doth hie,
Or like a quaver in a short song,
Or like a journey three days long,
Or like the snow when summer 's come,
Or like the pear, or like the plum;
Even such is man, who heaps up sorrow,
Lives but this day, and dies to-morrow.
The lightning 's past, the post must go,
The song is short, the journey 's so,
The pear doth rot, the plum doth fall,
The snow dissolves,—and so must all!

SIMON WASTEL (1560–1630).

A HAPPY LIFE.

How happy is he born and taught,
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death;
Untied unto the worldly care
Of public fame, or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Or vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend:—

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, and fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.

SIR HENRY WOTTON (1568–1639).

LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG.

LOVE me little, love me long!
Is the burden of my song:
Love that is too hot and strong
Burneth soon to waste.
Still I would not have thee cold—
Not too backward, nor too bold;
Love that lasteth till 't is old
Fadeth not in haste.
Love me little, love me long!
Is the burden of my song.

If thou lovest me too much,
'T will not prove as true a touch;
Love me little more than such,—
For I fear the end.
I 'm with little well content,
And a little from thee sent
Is enough, with true intent
To be steadfast, friend.

Say thou lovest me, while thou live
I to thee my love will give,
Never dreaming to deceive
While that life endures;
Nay, and after death, in sooth,
I to thee will keep my truth,
As now when in my May of youth:
This my love assures.

Constant love is moderate ever,
And it will through life persever;
Give me that with true endeavor,—
I will it restore.
A suit of durance let it be,
For all weathers,—that for me,—
For the land or for the sea:
Lasting evermore.

Winter's cold or summer's heat,
Autumn's tempests on it beat;
It can never know defeat,
Never can rebel;
Such the love that I would gain,
Such the love, I tell thee plain,
Thou must give, or woo in vain:
So to thee—farewell!

ANONYMOUS (1569).

THE WILL.

BEFORE I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,
Great Love, some legacies: I here bequeathe
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see;
If they be blind, then, love, I give them thee;
My tongue to fame; to ambassadors mine ears;
To women, or the sea, my tears.
Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore,
By making me serve her who had twenty more,
That I should give to none but such as had too
much before.

My constancy I to the planets give;
My truth to them who at the court do live;
Mine ingenuity and openness
To Jesuits; to buffoons my pensiveness;

Digitized by Google

My silence to any who abroad have been;
My money to a Capuchin.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by appointing me
To love there where no love received can be,
Only to give to such as have no good capacity.

My faith I give to Roman Catholics;
All my good works unto the schismatics
Of Amsterdam; my best civility
And courtship to an university;
My modesty I give to soldiers bare;
My patience let gamesters share.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her that holds my love disparity,
Only to give to those that count my gifts indignity.

I give my reputation to those
Which were my friends; mine industry to foes;
To schoolmen I bequeathe my doubtfulness;
My sickness to physicians, or excess;
To Nature all that I in rhyme have writ!
And to my company my wit.
Thou, Love, by making me adore
Her who begot this love in me before,
Taught'st me to make as though I gave, when I do but restore.

To him for whom the passing-bell next tolls
I give my physic-books; my written rolls
Of moral counsels I to Bedlam give;
My brazen medals, unto them which live
In want of bread; to them which pass among
All foreigners, my English tongue.
Thou, Love, by making me love one
Who thinks her friendship a fit portion
For younger lovers, dost my gifts thus disproportion.

Therefore I 'll give no more, but I 'll undo
The world by dying, because love dies too.
Then all your beauties will be no more worth
Than gold in mines, where none doth draw it forth,
And all your graces no more use shall have
Than a sun-dial in a grave.
Thou, Love, taught'st me, by making me
Love her who doth neglect both me and thee,
To invent and practise this one way to annihilate all three.

JOHN DONNE (1573–1631).

IN A CLEAR STARRY NIGHT.

LORD! when those glorious lights I see
With which Thou hast adorned the skies,
Observing how they movèd be,
And how their splendor fills mine eyes,
Methinks it is too large a grace,
But that Thy love ordained it so—
That creatures in so high a place
Should servants be to man below.

The meanest lamp now shining there
In size and lustre doth exceed
The noblest of Thy creatures here,
And of our friendship hath no need.
Yet these upon mankind attend,
For secret aid, or public light;
And from the world's extremest end
Repair unto us every night.

Oh! had that stamp been undefaced
Which first on us Thy hand had set,
How highly should we have been graced,
Since we are so much honored yet!
Good God, for what but for the sake
Of Thy beloved and only Son,
Who did on Him our nature take,
Were these exceeding favors done?

As we by Him have honored been,
Let us to Him due honors give;
Let His uprightness hide our sin,
And let us worth from Him receive.
Yea, so let us by grace improve
What Thou by Nature doth bestow,
That to Thy dwelling-place above
We may be raisèd from below.

GEORGE WITHER (1588–1667).

SONG.

ASK me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is passed, the fading rose;
For, in your beauty's orient deep,
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For, in pure love, Heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is passed;
For in your sweet, dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light
That downward fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixèd become, as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phœnix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

THOMAS CAREW (1589–1639).

EXEQUY.

ACCEPT, thou shrine of my dead saint,
Instead of dirges, this complaint;
And for sweet flowers to crown thy hearse
Receive a strew of weeping verse
From thy grieved friend, whom thou might'st see
Quite melted into tears for thee.

Dear loss! since thy untimely fate,
My task hath been to meditate

Digitized by Google

On thee, on thee; thou art the book,
The library whereon I look,
Thou almost blind; for thee (loved clay)
I languish out, not live, the day,
Using no other exercise
But what I practise with mine eyes,
By which wet glasses I find out
How lazily Time creeps about
To one that mourns: this, only this,
My exercise and business is:
So I compute the weary hours
With sighs dissolvèd into showers.

Nor wonder if my time go thus
Backward and most preposterous;
Thou hast benighted me; thy set
This eve of blackness did beget,
Who wast my day (though overcast
Before thou hast thy noontide passed),
And I remember must in tears
Thou scarce hadst seen so many years
As day tells hours: by thy clear sun
My love and fortune first did run:

But thou wilt never more appear
Folded within my hemisphere,
Since both thy light and motion
Like a fled star is fallen and gone,
And 'twixt me and my soul's dear wish
The earth now interposèd is,
Which such a strange eclipse doth make
As ne'er was read in almanac.

I could allow thee for a time
To darken me and my sad clime:
Were it a month, or year, or ten,
I would thy exile live till then.
And all that space my mirth adjourn,
So thou wouldst promise to return,
And, putting off thy ashy shroud,
At length disperse this sable cloud!

But woe is me! the longest date
Too narrow is to calculate
These empty hopes: never shall I
Be so much blessed as to descry
A glimpse of thee, till that day come
Which shall the earth to cinders doom,
And a fierce fever must calcine
The body of this world like thine,
(My little world!) that fit of fire
Once off, our bodies shall aspire
To our souls' bliss: then we shall rise,
And view ourselves with clearer eyes
In that calm region where no night
Can hide us from each other's sight.

Meantime thou hast her, Earth: much good
May my harm do thee! Since it stood
With Heaven's will I might not call
Her longer mine, I give thee all
My short-lived right and interest
In her whom living I loved best;
With a most free and bounteous grief
I give thee what I could not keep.
Be kind to her, and, prithee, look
Thou write into thy doomsday book
Each parcel of this Rarity
Which in thy casket shrined doth lie.
See that thou make thy reckoning straight,
And yield her back again by weight:
For thou must audit on thy trust
Each grain and atom of this trust,
As thou wilt answer Him that lent,
Not gave thee, my dear monument.
So, close the ground, and 'bout her shade
Black curtains draw: my bride is laid.

Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted!
My last good-night! Thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake:
Till age or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves, and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.
Stay for me there: I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.
And think not much of my delay;
I am already on the way,
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.
Each minute is a short degree,
And every hour a step toward thee.
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my west
Of life, almost by eight hours' sail,
Than when Sleep breathed his drowsy gale.
Thus from the sun my bottom steers,
And my day's compass downward bears;
Nor labor I to stem the tide
Through which to thee I swiftly glide.

'Tis true, with shame and grief I yield;
Thou, like the van, first took'st the field,
And gotten hast the victory.
In thus adventuring to die
Before me, whose more years might crave
A just precedence in the grave.
But hark! my pulse, like a soft drum,
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by thee.

The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution
With hope and comfort. Dear (forgive
The crime) I am content to live,
Divided, with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.

HENRY KING (1591–1669).

SONG.

GATHER ye rose-buds as ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he 's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he 's to setting.

The age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse and worst
Time still succeed the former.

Digitized by Google

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674).

THE VANITY OF THE WORLD.

FALSE world, thou ly'st: thou canst not lend
The least delight:
Thy favors cannot gain a friend,
They are so slight:
Thy morning pleasures make an end
To please at night:
Poor are the wants that thou supply'st,
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou vy'st
With heaven; fond earth, thou boasts; false world, thou ly'st.

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales
Of endless treasure;
Thy bounty offers easy sales
Of lasting pleasure;
Thou ask'st the conscience what she ails,
And swear'st to ease her;
There 's none can want where thou supply'st:
There 's none can give where thou deny'st.
Alas! fond world, thou boasts; false world, thou ly'st.

What well-advisèd ear regards
What earth can say?
Thy words are gold, but thy rewards
Are painted clay:
Thy cunning can but pack the cards,
Thou canst not play:
Thy game at weakest, still thou vy'st;
If seen, and then revy'd, deny'st:
Thou art not what thou seem'st; false world, thou ly'st.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint
Of new-coined treasure;
A paradise, that has no stint,
No change, no measure;
A painted cask, but nothing in 't,
Nor wealth, nor pleasure:
Vain earth! that falsely thus comply'st
With man; vain man! that thou rely'st
On earth; vain man, thou dot'st; vain earth, thou ly'st.

What mean dull souls, in this high measure,
To haberdash
In earth's base wares, whose greatest treasure
Is dross and trash?
The height of whose enchanting pleasure
Is but a flash?
Are these the goods that thou supply'st
Us mortals with? Are these the high'st?
Can these bring cordial peace? false world, thou ly'st.

FRANCIS QUARLES (1592–1644).

THE ANGLER'S WISH.

I IN these flowery meads would be,
These crystal streams should solace me;
To whose harmonious bubbling noise
I, with my angle, would rejoice,
Sit here, and see the turtle-dove
Court his chaste mate to acts of love;

Or, on that bank, feel the west wind
Breathe health and plenty; please my mind,
To see sweet dew-drops kiss these flowers,
And then washed off by April showers;
Here, hear my kenna sing a song:
There, see a blackbird feed her young,

Or a laverock build her nest;
Here, give my weary spirits rest,
And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love.
Thus, free from lawsuits, and the noise
Of princes' courts, I would rejoice;

Or, with my Bryan and a book,
Loiter long days near Shawford brook;
There sit by him, and eat my meat;
There see the sun both rise and set;
There bid good-morning to next day;
There meditate my time away;
And angle on; and beg to have
A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

IZAAK WALTON (1593–1683).

DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST.

THE glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate—
Death lays his icy hands on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield—
They tame but one another still;
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow—
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar, now,
See where the victor victim bleeds!
All heads must come
To the cold tomb—
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.

JAMES SHIRLEY (1594–1666).

Digitized by Google

THE BRIDE.

FROM A BALLAD UPON A WEDDING.

The maid, and thereby hangs a tale,
For such a maid no Whitsun-ale
Could ever yet produce:
No grape that 's kindly ripe could be
So round, so plump, so soft as she,
Nor half so full of juice.

Her finger was so small, the ring
Would not stay on which they did bring—
It was too wide a peck;
And, to say truth—for out it must—
It looked like the great collar—just—
About our young colt's neck.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light;
But O, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
Is half so fine a sight.

Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison;
Who sees them is undone;
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Cath'rine pear,
The side that 's next the sun.

Her lips were red; and one was thin,
Compared to that was next her chin.
Some bee had stung it newly;
But, Dick, her eyes so guard her face,
I durst no more upon them gaze,
Than on the sun in July.

Her mouth so small, when she does speak,
Thou 'dst swear her teeth her words did break,
That they might passage get;
But she so handled still the matter,
They came as good as ours, or better,
And are not spent a whit.

Sir John Suckling (1609–1641).

TO LUCASTA,

ON GOING TO THE WARS.

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkinde,
That from the nunnerie
Of thy chaste breast and quiet minde,
To warre and armes I flee.

True, a new mistresse now I chase—
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith imbrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such,
As you, too, should adore;
I could not love thee, deare, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

Richard Lovelace (1618–1658).

THEY ARE ALL GONE.

They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here!
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear;

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove—
Or those faint beams in which this hill is dressed
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days—
My days which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.

O holy hope! and high humility—
High as the heavens above!
These are your walks, and you have showed them me
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death—the jewel of the just—
Shining nowhere but in the dark!
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know,
At first sight, if the bird be flown,
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up gives room,
She 'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under Thee!
Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass;
Or else remove me hence unto that hill
Where I shall need no glass.

Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

SONG.

Love still has something of the sea,
From whence his mother rose;
No time his slaves from doubt can free,
Nor give their thoughts repose.

Digitized by Google

They are becalmed in clearest days,
And in rough weather tossed;
They wither under cold delays,
Or are in tempests lost.

One while they seem to touch the port,
Then straight into the main
Some angry wind, in cruel sport,
The vessel drives again.

At first Disdain and Pride they fear,
Which if they chance to 'scape,
Rivals and falsehood soon appear,
In a more cruel shape.

By such degrees to joy they come,
And are so long withstood;
So slowly they receive the sum,
It hardly does them good.

'T is cruel to prolong a pain;
And to defer a joy,
Believe me, gentle Celemene,
Offends the wingèd boy.

An hundred thousands oaths your fears,
Perhaps, would not remove;
And if I gazed a thousand years,
I could not deeper love.

SIR CHARLES SEDLEY (1639–1701).

ON THE PROSPECT OF PLANTING ARTS AND LEARNING IN AMERICA.

THE Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame;

In happy climes, where from the genial sun
And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
The force of art by Nature seems outdone,
And fancied beauties by the true;

In happy climes the seat of innocence,
Where Nature guides and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense,
The pedantry of courts and schools.

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great uprising epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

GEORGE BERKELEY (1684–1753).

LOCHABER NO MORE.

FAREWELL to Lochaber! and farewell, my Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I hae mony day been!
For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more!
These tears that I shed they are a' for my dear,
And no for the dangers attending on war,
Though borne on rough seas to a far bloody shore,
Maybe to return to Lochaber no more.

Though hurricanes rise, and rise every wind,
They'll ne'er make a tempest like that in my mind;
Though loudest of thunder on louder waves roar,
That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.
To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pained;
By ease that's inglorious no fame can be gained;
And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,
And I must deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeany, maun plead my excuse;
Since honor commands me, how can I refuse?
Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,
And without thy favor I'd better not be.
I gae then, my lass, to win honor and fame,
And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.

ALLAN RAMSAY (1685–1758).

THE FLY.

OCCASIONED BY A FLY DRINKING OUT OF THE AUTHOR'S CUP.

BUSY, curious, thirsty fly!
Drink with me, and drink as I!
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sip it up:
Make the most of life you may;
Life is short and wears away!

Both alike, both mine and thine,
Hasten quick to their decline!
Thine's a summer; mine no more,
Though repeated to threescore!
Threescore summers, when they're gone,
Will appear as short as one!

VINCENT BOURNE (1695–1747).

CUMNOR HALL.

THE dews of summer night did fall;
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

Now naught was heard beneath the skies,
The sounds of busy life were still,
Save an unhappy lady's sighs,
That issued from that lonely pile.

Digitized by Google

"Leicester," she cried, "is this thy love
That thou so oft hast sworn to me,
To leave me in this lonely grove,
Immured in shameful privity?

"No more thou com'st with lover's speed,
Thy once belovèd bride to see;
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern Earl, 's the same to thee.

"Not so the usage I received
When happy in my father's hall;
No faithless husband then me grieved,
No chilling fears did me appall.

"I rose up with the cheerful morn,
No lark more blithe, no flower more gay;
And like the bird that haunts the thorn,
So merrily sung the livelong day.

"If that my beauty is but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful Earl, it well was prized?

"And when you first to me made suit,
How fair I was, you oft would say!
And proud of conquest, plucked the fruit,
Then left the blossom to decay.

"Yes! now neglected and despised,
The rose is pale, the lily's dead;
But he that once their charms so prized,
Is sure the cause those charms are fled.

"For know, when sick'ning grief doth prey,
And tender love's repaid with scorn,
The sweetest beauty will decay,—
What floweret can endure the storm?

"At court, I 'm told, is beauty's throne,
Where every lady's passing rare,
That Eastern flowers, that shame the sun,
Are not so glowing, not so fair.

"Then, Earl, why didst thou leave the beds
Where roses and where lilies vie,
To seek a primrose, whose pale shades
Must sicken when those gauds are by?

"'Mong rural beauties I was one,
Among the fields wild flowers are fair;
Some country swain might me have won,
And thought my beauty passing rare.

"But, Leicester (or I much am wrong),
Or 't is not beauty lures thy vows;
Rather ambition's glided crown
Makes thee forget thy humble spouse.

"Then, Leicester, why, again I plead,
(The injured surely may repine)—
Why didst thou wed a country maid,
When some fair princess might be thine?

"Why didst thou praise my humble charms,
And, oh! then leave them to decay?
Why didst thou win me to thy arms,
Then leave to mourn the livelong day?

"The village maidens of the plain
Salute me lowly as they go;
Envious they mark my silken train,
Nor think a Countess can have woe.

"The simple nymphs! they little know
How far more happy 's their estate;
To smile for joy than sigh for woe—
To be content—than to be great.

"How far less blest am I than them?
Daily to pine and waste with care?
Like the poor plant, that, from its stem
Divided, feels the chilling air.

"Nor, cruel Earl! can I enjoy
The humble charms of solitude;
Your minions proud my peace destroy,
By sullen frowns or pratings rude.

"Last night, as sad I chanced to stray,
The village death-bell smote my ear!
They winked aside, and seemed to say,
'Countess, prepare, thy end is near."

"And now, while happy peasants sleep,
Here I sit lonely and forlorn;
No one to soothe me as I weep,
Save Philomel on yonder thorn.

"My spirits flag—my hopes decay—
Still that dread death-bell smites my ear!
And many a boding seems to say,
'Countess, prepare, thy end is near!'"

Thus sore and sad that lady grieved,
In Cumnor Hall so lone and drear;
And many a heartfelt sigh she heaved,
And let fall many a bitter tear.

And ere the dawn of day appeared,
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear,
Full many a piercing scream was heard,
And many a cry of mortal fear.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aërial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapped its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howled at village door,
The oaks were shattered on the green;
Woe was the hour—for never more
That hapless Countess e'er was seen!

And in that Manor now no more
Is cheerful feast and sprightly ball;
For ever since that dreary hour
Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,
Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall,
Nor ever lead the merry dance
Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveller oft hath sighed,
And pensive wept the Countess' fall,
As wandering onward they 've espied
The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE (1734–1788).

Digitized by Google

THE TOPER'S APOLOGY.

I'M often asked by plodding souls
  And men of sober tongue,
What joy I take in draining bowls
  And tippling all night long.
But though these cautious knaves I scorn,
  For once I 'll not disdain
To tell them why I sit till morn
  And fill my glass again.

'T is by the glow my bumper gives,
  Life's picture 's mellow made;
The fading light then brightly lives,
  And softly sinks the shade.
Some happier tint still rises there,
  With every drop I drain;
And that I think 's a reason fair
  To fill my glass again.

My Muse, too, when her wings are dry,
  No frolic flights will take,
But round the bowl she 'll dip and fly,
  Like swallows round a lake.
Then, if each nymph will have her share,
  Before she 'll bless her swain,
Why, that I think 's a reason fair
  To fill my glass again.

In life I 've rung all changes through,
  Run every pleasure down,
'Mid each extreme of folly too,
  And lived with half the town;
For me there 's nothing new nor rare,
  Till wine deceives my brain;
And that I think 's a reason fair
  To fill my glass again.

I find, too, when I stint my glass,
  And sit with sober air,
I 'm prosed by some dull reasoning ass,
  Who treads the path of care;
Or, harder still, am doomed to bear
  Some coxcomb's fribbling strain;
And that I 'm sure 's a reason fair
  To fill my glass again.

There 's many a lad I knew is dead,
  And many a lass grown old,
And as the lesson strikes my head,
  My weary heart grows cold;
But wine awhile drives off despair—
  Nay, bids a hope remain;
Why, that I think 's a reason fair
  To fill my glass again.

CHARLES MORRIS (1739–1838).

TO THE CUCKOO.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove!
  Thou messenger of Spring!
Now heaven repairs thy rural seat,
  And woods thy welcome sing.

Soon as the daisy decks the green,
  Thy certain voice we hear.
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
  Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful visitant! with thee
  I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
  From birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy, wandering through the wood
  To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, thy most curious voice to hear,
  And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
  Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
  Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
  Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
  No winter in thy year!

Oh, could I fly, I 'd fly with thee!
  We 'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
  Attendants on the Spring.

JOHN LOGAN (1748–1788).

THE GROVES OF BLARNEY.

THE groves of Blarney they look so charming,
  Down by the purlings of sweet silent brooks,
All decked with posies, that spontaneous grow there,
  Planted in order in the rocky nooks.
'T is there the daisy, and the sweet carnation,
  The blooming pink, and the rose so fair;
Likewise the lily, and the daffodilly—
  All flowers that scent the sweet, open air.

'T is Lady Jaffers owns this plantation,
  Like Alexander, or like Helen fair;
There 's no commander in all the nation
  For regulation can with her compare.
Such walls surround her, that no nine-pounder
  Could ever plunder her place of strength;
But Oliver Cromwell, he did her pommel,
  And made a breach in her battlement.

There 's gravel walks there for speculation,
  And conversation in sweet solitude;
'T is there the lover may hear the dove, or
  The gentle plover, in the afternoon.
And if a young lady should be so engaging
  As to walk alone in those shady bowers,
'T is there her courtier, he may transport her
  In some dark port, or under ground.

For 't is there's the cave where no daylight enters,
  But bats and badgers are forever bred;
Being mossed by natur' which makes it sweeter
  Than a coach and six, or a feather bed.
'T is there the lake that is stored with perches,
  And comely eels in the verdant mud;
Besides the leeches, and the groves of beeches,
  All standing in order for to guard the flood.

Digitized by Google

'T is there 's the kitchen hangs many a flitch in,
With the maids a-stitching upon the stair;
The bread and biske', the beer and whiskey,
Would make you frisky if you were there.
'T is there you 'd see Peg Murphy's daughter
A washing praties forenent the door,
With Roger Cleary, and Father Healy,
All blood relations to my Lord Donoughmore.

There 's statues gracing this noble place in,
All heathen goddesses so fair—
Bold Neptune, Plutarch, and Nicodemus,
All standing naked in the open air.
So now to finish this brave narration,
Which my poor geni' could not entwine;
But were I Homer, or Nebuchadnezzar,
'T is in every feature I would make it shine.

RICHARD ALFRED MILLIKEN (1757–1815).

TO ——.

Too late I stayed—forgive the crime—
Unheeded flew the hours;
How noiseless falls the foot of Time
That only treads on flowers!

And who, with clear account, remarks
The ebbings of his glass,
When all its sands are diamond-sparks,
That dazzle as they pass?

Ah! who to sober measurement
Time's happy swiftness brings,
When birds-of-paradise have lent
Their plumage to his wings?

ROBERT WILLIAM SPENCER (1770–1834).

NIGHT.

MYSTERIOUS Night! when our first Parent knew
Thee, from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely Frame,
This glorious canopy of Light and Blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew
Bathed in the rays of the great setting Flame,
Hesperus with the Host of Heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened on Man's view.
Who could have thought such Darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
While flower, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless Orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE (1773–1840).

SAINT PATRICK.

[The authorship of this poem has been attributed to Henry Bennett, who was born in Cork, Ireland, about 1785; but according to Lover it was written in 1814 by two gentlemen conjointly, who were on their way to a masquerade as ballad-singers.]

OH! St. Patrick was a gentleman,
Who came of decent people;
He built a church in Dublin town,
And on it put a steeple.
His father was a Gallagher;
His mother was a Brady;
His aunt was an O'Shaughnessy,
His uncle an O'Grady,
So, success attend St. Patrick's fist,
For he 's a saint so clever;
Oh! he gave the snakes and toads a twist,
And bothered them forever!

The Wicklow hills are very high,
And so 's the hill of Howth, sir;
But there's a hill, much bigger still,
Much higher nor them both, sir:
'T was on the top of this high hill
St. Patrick preached his sarmint
That drove the frogs into the bogs,
And banished all the varmint.

There 's not a mile in Ireland's isle
Where dirty varmin musters,
But where he put his dear fore-foot,
And murdered them in clusters.
The toads went pop, the frogs went hop,
Slap-dash into the water;
And the snakes committed suicide
To save themselves from slaughter.

Nine hundred thousand reptiles blue
He charmed with sweet discourses,
And dined on them at Killaloe
In soups and second courses.
Where blind-worms crawling in the grass
Disgusted all the nation,
He gave them a rise, which opened their eyes
To a sense of their situation.

No wonder that those Irish lads
Should be so gay and frisky,
For sure St. Pat he taught them that,
As well as making whiskey;
No wonder that the saint himself
Should understand distilling,
Since his mother kept a shebeen-shop
In the town of Enniskillen.

Oh! was I but so fortunate
As to be back in Munster,
'T is I 'd be bound that from that ground
I never more would once stir.
For there St. Patrick planted turf,
And plenty of the praties,
With pigs galore, ma gra, ma 'store,
And cabbages—and ladies.
So, success attend St. Patrick's fist,
For he 's a saint so clever;
Oh! he gave the snakes and toads a twist,
And bothered them forever!

Digitized by Google

THE PAUPER'S DEATHBED.

Tread softly! bow the head—
  In reverent silence bow!
No passing bell doth toll;
Yet an immortal soul
  Is passing now.

Stranger, however great,
  With lowly reverence bow!
There 's one in that poor shed—
One by that paltry bed—
  Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,
  Lo! Death doth keep his state!
Enter!—no crowds attend—
Enter!—no guards defend
  This palace-gate.

That pavement damp and cold
  No smiling courtiers tread;
One silent woman stands,
Lifting with meagre hands
  A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—
  An infant wail alone;
A sob suppressed—again
That short deep gasp—and then
  The parting groan.

Oh! change—oh! wondrous change!
  Burst are the prison-bars!
This moment there, so low,
So agonized—and now
  Beyond the stars!

Oh! change—stupendous change!
  There lies the soulless clod!
The sun eternal breaks;
The new immortal wakes—
  Wakes with his God.

Caroline Bowles Southey (1786–1854).

AILLEEN.

'T is not for love of gold I go,
  'T is not for love of fame;
Though Fortune should her smile bestow,
  And I may win a name,
    Ailleen,
  And I may win a name.

And yet it is for gold I go,
  And yet it is for fame,
That they may deck another brow,
  And bless another name,
    Ailleen,
  And bless another name.

For this, but this, I go—for this
  I lose thy love awhile,
And all the soft and quiet bliss
  Of thy young, faithful smile,
    Ailleen,
  Of thy young, faithful smile.

And I go to brave a world I hate,
  And woo it o'er and o'er,
And tempt a wave, and try a fate
  Upon a stranger shore,
    Ailleen,
  Upon a stranger shore.

Oh, when the bays are all my own,
  I know a heart will care!
Oh, when the gold is wooed and won,
  I know a brow shall wear,
    Ailleen,
  I know a brow shall wear!

And when with both returned again,
  My native land to see,
I know a smile will meet me there,
  And a hand will welcome me,
    Ailleen,
  And a hand will welcome me!

John Banim (1798–1842).

THE MARINER'S DREAM.

In slumbers of midnight the sailor-boy lay;
  His hammock swung loose at the sport of the wind;
But watch-worn and weary, his cares flew away,
  And visions of happiness danced o'er his mind.

He dreamed of his home, of his dear native bowers,
  And pleasures that waited on life's merry morn;
While memory stood sideways half covered with flowers,
  And restored every rose, but secreted its thorn.

Then Fancy her magical pinions spread wide,
  And bade the young dreamer in ecstasy rise;
Now far, far behind him the green waters glide,
  And the cot of his forefathers blesses his eyes.

The jessamine clambers in flowers o'er the thatch,
  And the swallow chirps sweet from her nest in the wall;
All trembling with transport, he raises the latch,
  And the voices of loved ones reply to his call.

A father bends o'er him with looks of delight;
  His cheek is impearled with a mother's warm tear;
And the lips of the boy in a love-kiss unite
  With the lips of the maid whom his bosom holds dear.

The heart of the sleeper beats high in his breast;
  Joy quickens his pulses—his hardships seem o'er;

Digitized by Google

And a murmur of happiness steals through his rest:
"O God, thou hast blest me—I ask for no more."

Ah! whence is that flame which now bursts on his eye?
Ah! what is that sound which now 'larms on his ear?
'T is the lightning's red gleam, painting hell on the sky!
'T is the crashing of thunders, the groan of the sphere!

He springs from his hammock—he flies to the deck;
Amazement confronts him with images dire;
Wild winds and mad waves drive the vessel a wreck;
The masts fly in splinters; the shrouds are on fire.

Like mountains the billows tremendously swell;
In vain the lost wretch calls on mercy to save;
Unseen hands of spirits are ringing his knell,
And the death-angel flaps his broad wings o'er the wave!

O sailor-boy, woe to thy dream of delight!
In darkness dissolves the gay frost-work of bliss.
Where now is the picture that Fancy touched bright—
Thy parents' fond pressure, and love's honeyed kiss?

O sailor-boy! sailor-boy! never again
Shall home, love, or kindred, thy wishes repay;
Unblessed and unhonored, down deep in the main,
Full many a fathom, thy frame shall decay.

No tomb shall e'er plead to remembrance for thee,
Or redeem form or frame from the merciless surge,
But the white foam of waves shall thy winding-sheet be,
And winds in the midnight of winter thy dirge!

On a bed of green sea-flowers thy limbs shall be laid—
Around thy white bones the red coral shall grow;
Of thy fair yellow locks threads of amber be made,
And every part suit to thy mansion below.

Days, months, years, and ages, shall circle away,
And still the vast waters above thee shall roll;
Earth loses thy pattern forever and aye—
O sailor-boy! sailor-boy! peace to thy soul!

WILLIAM DIMOND (1800–1837).

THE SWALLOW.

THE little comer 's coming, the comer o'er the sea,
The comer of the summer, all the sunny days to be;
How pleasant, through the pleasant sleep, thy early twitter heard—
O swallow by the lattice! glad days be thy reward!

Thine be sweet morning, with the bee that 's out for honey-dew,
And glowing be the noontide, for the grasshopper and you,
And mellow shine, o'er days' decline, the sun to light thee home—
What can molest thy airy nest? Sleep till the morrow come.

The river blue, that lapses through the valley, hears thee sing,
And murmurs much beneath the touch of thy light dipping wing;
The thunder-cloud over us bowed, in deeper gloom is seen,
When quick relieved it glances to thy bosom's silvery sheen.

The silent power that brings thee back, with leading-strings of love,
To haunts where first the summer sun fell on thee from above,
Shall bind thee more to come aye to the music of our leaves,
For here thy young, where thou hast sprung, shall glad thee in our eaves.

THOMAS AIRD (1802–1876).

THE WOMAN OF THREE COWS.

O WOMAN of Three Cows agragh! don't let your tongue thus rattle!
O don't be saucy, don't be stiff, because you may have cattle!
I've seen—and here 's my hand to you, I only say what 's true—
A many a one with twice your stock not half so proud as you.

Good luck to you! don't scorn the poor, and don't be their despiser;
For worldly wealth soon melts away, and cheats the very miser,
And death soon strips the proudest wreath from haughty human brows;
Then don't be stiff, and don't be proud, good Woman of Three Cows!

See where Momonia's heroes lie, proud Owen More's descendants,—
'T is they that won the glorious name, and had the grand attendants!
If they were forced to bow to Fate, as every mortal bows,
Can you be proud, can you be stiff, my Woman of Three Cows?

Digitized by Google

The brave sons of the Lord of Clare, they left the land to mourning;
Movrone! for they were banished, with no hope of their returning.
Who knows in what abodes of want those youths were driven to house?
Yet you can give yourself these airs, O Woman of Three Cows!

Oh, think of Donnell of the Ships, the chief whom nothing daunted,—
See how he fell in distant Spain, unchronicled, unchanted!
He sleeps, the great O'Sullivan, where thunder cannot rouse;
Then ask yourself, should you be proud, good Woman of Three Cows?

O'Ruark, Maguire, those souls of fire, whose names are shrined in story,—
Think how their high achievements once made Erin's greatest glory!
Yet now their bones lie mouldering under weeds and cypress-boughs,
And so, for all your pride, will yours, O Woman of Three Cows!

The O'Carrolls also, famed when fame was only for the boldest,
Rest in forgotten sepulchres with Erin's best and oldest;
Yet who so great as they of yore, in battle or carouse?
Just think of that, and hide your head, good Woman of Three Cows!

Your neighbor's poor, and you it seems are big with vain ideas,
Because, forsooth, you've got three cows—one more, I see, than she has;
That tongue of yours wags more at times than charity allows,
But if you're strong be merciful, great Woman of Three Cows!

Now, there you go! You still, of course, keep up your scornful bearing,
And I'm too poor to hinder you; but, by the cloak I'm wearing,
If I had but four cows myself, even though you were my spouse,
I'd thwack you well to cure your pride, my Woman of Three Cows!

JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1803–1849).

THE THREE SONS.

I HAVE a son, a little son, a boy just five years old,
With eyes of thoughtful earnestness, and mind of gentle mould.
They tell me that unusual grace in all his ways appears,
That my child is grave and wise of heart beyond his childish years.

I cannot say how this may be; I know his face is fair—
And yet his chiefest comeliness is his sweet and serious air:
I know his heart is kind and fond; I know he loveth me:
But loveth yet his mother more with grateful fervency.
But that which others most admire, is the thought which fills his mind,
The food for grave inquiring speech he everywhere doth find.
Strange questions doth he ask of me, when we together walk;
He scarcely thinks as children think, or talks as children talk.
Nor cares he much for childish sports, dotes not on bat or ball,
But looks on manhood's ways and works, and aptly mimics all.
His little heart is busy still, and oftentimes perplexed
With thoughts about this world of ours, and thoughts about the next.
He kneels at his dear mother's knee; she teacheth him to pray;
And strange, and sweet, and solemn then are the words which he will say.
Oh, should my gentle child be spared to manhood's years like me,
A holier and a wiser man I trust that he will be;
And when I look into his eyes, and stroke his thoughtful brow,
I dare not think what I should feel, were I to lose him now.

I have a son, a second son, a simple child of three;
I'll not declare how bright and fair his little features be,
How silver sweet those tones of his when he prattles on my knee;
I do not think his light-blue eye is, like his brother's, keen,
Nor his brow so full of childish thought as his hath ever been;
But his little heart's a fountain pure of kind and tender feeling;
And his every look's a gleam of light, rich depths of love revealing.
When he walks with me, the country-folk, who pass us in the street,
Will shout for joy and bless my boy, he looks so mild and sweet.
A playfellow is he to all; and yet, with cheerful tone,
Will sing his little song of love, when left to sport alone.
His presence is like sunshine sent to gladden home and hearth,
To comfort us in all our griefs, and sweeten all our mirth.
Should he grow up to riper years, God grant his heart may prove
As sweet a home for heavenly grace as now for earthly love;
And if, beside his grave, the tears our aching eyes must dim,
God comfort us for all the love which we shall lose in him!

Digitized by Google

I have a son, a third sweet son; his age I cannot tell,
For they reckon not by years and months where he is gone to dwell.
To us, for fourteen anxious months, his infant smiles were given;
And then he bade farewell to earth, and went to live in heaven.
I cannot tell what form is his, what looks he weareth now,
Nor guess how bright a glory crowns his shining seraph brow.
The thoughts that fill his sinless soul, the bliss which he doth feel,
Are numbered with the secret things which God will not reveal.
But I know (for God hath told me this) that he is now at rest,
Where other blessed infants be, on their Saviour's loving breast.
I know his spirit feels no more this weary load of flesh,
But his sleep is blessed with endless dreams of joy forever fresh.
I know the angels fold him close beneath their glittering wings,
And soothe him with a song that breathes of heaven's divinest things.
I know that we shall meet our babe (his mother dear and I)
Where God for aye shall wipe away all tears from every eye.
Whate'er befalls his brethren twain, his bliss can never cease;
Their lot may here be grief and fear, but his is certain peace.
It may be that the tempter's wiles their souls from bliss may sever;
But, if our own poor faith fail not, he must be ours forever.
When we think of what our darling is; and what we still must be—
When we muse on that world's perfect bliss, and this world's misery—
When we groan beneath this load of sin, and feel this grief and pain—
Oh! we'd rather lose our other two, than have him here again.

JOHN MOULTRIE (1804).

THE ANNUITY.

I GAED to spend a week in Fife;
An unco week it proved to be,
For there I met a waesome wife
Lamenting her viduity.
Her grief brak' out sae fierce and fell,
I thought her heart wad burst the shell;
An' I was sae left to mysel',
I sell 't her an annuity.

The bargain lookit fair eneugh,
She just was turned o' saxty-three;
I couldna guess'd she'd prove so teugh
By human ingenuity.
But years have come, an' years have gane,
An' there she 's yet as stieve's a stane;
The auld wife 's growing young again
Since she got her annuity.

She 's crined awa' to bane an' skin,
But that it seems is nought to me;
She 's like to live, although she 's in
The last stage o' tenuity.
She munches wi' her wizen'd gums,
An' stumps about on legs o' thrums,
But comes as sure as Christmas comes
To ca' for her annuity.

She jokes her joke, an' cracks her crack,
As spunkie as a growin' flea;
An' there she sits upon my back
A livin' perpetuity.
She hurkles by her ingleside,
An' toasts an' tans her wrinkled hide;
Wha kens how long she yet may bide,
To ca' for her annuity?

I read the tables drawn wi' care
For an insurance company;
Her chance o' life was stated there
Wi' perfect perspicuity.
But tables here, or tables there,
She 's lived ten years beyond her share,
An 's like to live a dozen mair,
To ca' for her annuity.

I gat the loon that drew the deed,
We spell'd it o'er right carefully;
In vain he yerk'd his souple head
To find an ambiguity.
It 's dated, tested, a' complete,
The proper stamp, nae word delete;
An' diligence, as on decreet,
May pass for her annuity.

I thought that grief might gar her quit:
Her only son was lost at sea;
But aff her wits behuved to flit,
An' leave her in fatuity.
She threeps, an' threeps he 's livin' yet,
For a' the tellin' she can get;
But catch the doited wife forget
To ca' for her annuity!

If there 's a sough o' cholera
Or typhus, wha sae gleg as she?
She buys up baths, an' drugs, an' a',
In siccan superfluity!
She doesna need—she's fever-proof,
The pest walked o'er her very roof;
She tauld me sae, an' then her loof
Held out for her annuity.

Ae day she fell, her arm she brak',
A compound fracture as could be;
Nae leech the cure wad undertak',
Whate'er was the gratuity.
It 's cured! she handles 't like a flail,
It does as weel in bits as hale;
But I 'm a broken man mysel'
Wi' her an' her annuity.

Her broozled flesh an' broken banes
Are weel as flesh an' banes can be;

Digitized by Google

She beats the taeds that live in stancs
  An' fatten in vacuity.
They die when they 're exposed to air,
They canna thole the atmosphere;
But her! expose her onywhere,
  She lives for her annuity!

The water-drap wears out the rock,
  As this eternal jade wears me;
I could withstand the single shock,
  But not the continuity.
It 's pay me here, an' pay me there,
An' pay me, pay me evermair;
I 'll gang demented wi' despair;
  I 'm *charged* for her annuity!

GEORGE OUTRAM (1805–1856).

LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

I 'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
  Where we sat side by side.
On a bright May mornin' long ago,
  When first you were my bride;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
  And the lark sang loud and high;
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
  And the love-light in your eye.

The place is little changed, Mary;
  The day is bright as then;
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
  And the corn is green again;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
  And your breath, warm on my cheek;
And I still keep list'nin' for the words
  You never more will speak.

'T is but a step down yonder lane,
  And the little church stands near,
The church where we were wed, Mary;
  I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
  And my step might break your rest,
For I 've laid you, darling, down to sleep,
  With your baby on your breast.

I 'm very lonely now, Mary—
  For the poor make no new friends;
But, oh! they love the better still
  The few our Father sends!
And you were all I had, Mary,
  My blessin' and my pride:
There 's nothing left to care for now,
  Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
  That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
  And my arm's young strength was gone;
There was comfort ever on your lip,
  And the kind look on your brow,
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
  Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
  When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger-pain was gnawin' there,
  And you hid it for my sake;
I bless you for the pleasant word,
  When your heart was sad and sore,
Oh! I 'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
  Where grief can 't reach you more!

I m biddin' you a long farewell,
  My Mary, kind and true!
But I 'll not forget you, darling,
  In the land I 'm goin' to;
They say there 's bread and work for all,
  And the sun shines always there,
But I 'll not forget old Ireland,
  Were it fifty times as fair!

And often in those grand old woods
  I 'll sit, and shut my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
  To the place where Mary lies;
And I 'll think I see the little stile
  Where we sat side by side,
And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
  When first you were my bride.

LADY DUFFERIN (1807–1867).

THE MUSICAL FROGS.

BREKEKEKEX! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!
  How sweet ye sing! would God that I
  Upon the bubbling pool might lie,
    And sun myself to-day
  With you! No curtained bride, I ween,
  Nor pillowed babe, nor cushioned queen,
  Nor tiny fay on emerald green,
    Nor silken lady gay,
  Lies on a softer couch. O Heaven!
  How many a lofty mortal, riven
    By keen-fanged inflammation,
  Might change his lot with yours, to float
  On sunny pond with bright green-coat,
  And sing with gently-throbbing throat
    Amid the croaking nation,
Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!

Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!
  Happy the bard who weaves his rhyme
  Recumbent on the purple thyme,
    In the fragrant month of June;
  Happy the sage whose lofty mood
  Doth with far-searching ken intrude
  Into the vast infinitude
    Of things beyond the moon;
  But happier not the wisest man
  Whose daring thought leads on the van
    Of star-eyed speculation,
  Than thou, quick-legged, light-bellied thing,
  Within the green pond's reedy ring,
  That with a murmurous joy dost sing
    Among the croaking nation,
Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!

Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!
  Great Jove with dark clouds sweeps the sky,

Digitized by Google

Where thunders roll and lightnings fly,
And gusty winds are roaring;
Fierce Mars his stormy steed bestrides,
And, lashing wild its bleeding sides,
O'er dead and dying madly rides,
Where the iron hail is pouring.
'T is well; such crash of mighty powers
Must be: the spell may not be ours
To tame the hot creation.
But little frogs with paddling foot
Can sing when gods and kings dispute,
And little bards can strum the lute
Amid the croaking nation,
With Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!

Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!
Farewell! not always I may sing
Around the green pond's reedy ring
With you, ye boggy muses!
But I must go and do stern battle
With herds of stiff-necked human cattle,
Whose eager lust of windy prattle
The gentle rein refuses.
Oh, if—but all such *if's* are vain;
I 'll go and blow my trump again,
With brazen iteration;
And when, by logic's iron rule,
I 've quashed each briskly babbling fool,
I 'll seek again your gentle school,
And hum beside the tuneful pool
Amid the croaking nation,
Brekekekex! co-ax! co-ax! O happy, happy frogs!

JOHN STUART BLACKIE (1809).

OLD SOULS.

THE world, not hushed, lay as in trance,
It saw the future in its van,
And drew its riches in advance,
To meet the greedy wants of man;
Till length of days, untimely sped,
Left its account unaudited.

The sun, untired, still rose and set,—
Swerved not an instant from its beat;
It had not lost a moment yet,
Nor used in vain its light and heat;
But, as in trance, from when it rose
To when it sank, man craved repose.

A holy light that shone of yore
He saw, despised, and left behind:
His heart was rotting to the core
Locked in the slumbers of the mind,
Not beat of drum, nor sound of fife,
Could rouse it to a sense of life.

A cry was heard, intoned and slow,
Of one who had no wares to vend:
His words were gentle, dull, and low,
And he called out, "Old souls to mend!"
He peddled on from door to door,
And looked not up to rich or poor.

His step kept on as if in pace
With some old timepiece in his head,
Nor ever did its way retrace;
Nor right nor left turned he his tread,
But uttered still his tinker's cry
To din the ears of passers-by.

So well they knew the olden note
Few heeded what the tinker spake,
Though here and there an ear it smote
And seemed a sudden hold to take;
But they had not the time to stay,
And it would do some other day.

Still on his way the tinker wends,
Though jobs be far between and few;
But here and there a soul he mends,
And makes it look as good as new.
Once set to work, once fairly hired,
His dull old hammer seems inspired.

Over the task his features glow;
He knocks away the rusty flakes;
A spark flies off at every blow;
At every rap new life awakes.
The soul once cleansed of outward sins,
His subtile handicraft begins.

Like iron unannealed and crude,
The soul is plunged into the blast;
To temper it, however rude,
'T is next in holy water cast;
Then on the anvil it receives
The nimblest stroke the tinker gives.

The tinker's task is at an end:
Stamped was the cross by that last blow
Again his cry, "Old souls to mend!"
Is heard in accents dull and low,
He pauses not to seek his pay—
That too will do another day.

One stops and says: "This soul of mine
Has been a tidy piece of ware,
But rust and rot in it combine,
And now corruption lays it bare.
Give it a look: there was a day
When it the morning hymn could say."

The tinker looks into his eye,
And there detects besetting sin,
The decent old-established lie,
That creeps through all the chinks within.
Lank are its tendrils, thick its shoots,
And like a worm's nest coil the roots.

Its flowers a deadly berry bear,
Whose seed, if tended from the pod,
Had grown in beauty with the year,
Like deodara drawn to God;
Not as the dank and curly brake,
That fosters venom for the snake.

The tinker takes the weed in tow,
And roots it out with tooth and nail;
His labor patient to bestow,
Lest like the herd of men he fail.
How best to extirpate the weed,
Has grown with him into a creed.

Digitized by Google

His task is steady, slow, and sure:
  He plucks it out, despite the howl,
With gentle hand and look demure,
  As cunning maiden draws a fowl.
He knows the job he is about,
And pulls till all the lie is out.

"Now steadfastly regard the man
  Who wrought your cure of rust and rot!
You saw him ere the work began:
  Is he the same, or is he not?
You saw the tinker; now behold
The Envoy of a God of old."

This said, he on the forehead stamps
  The downward stroke and one across,
Then straight upon his way he tramps;
  His time for profit, not for loss;
His task no sooner at an end
Than out he cries, "Old souls to mend!"

As night comes on he enters doors,
  He crosses halls, he goes up-stairs,
He reaches first and second floors,
  Still busied on his own affairs.
None stop him or a question ask;
None heed the workman at his task.

Despite his cry, "Old souls to mend!"
  Which into dull expression breaks,
Not moved are they, nor ear they lend
  To him who from old habit speaks;
Yet does the deep and one-toned cry
Send thrills along eternity.

He gads where out-door wretches walk,
  Where outcasts under arches creep;
Among them holds his simple talk.
  He lets them hear him in their sleep.
They who his name have still denied,
He lets them see him crucified.

On royal steps he takes a stand
  To light the beauties to the ball;
He holds a lantern in his hand,
  And lets his simple saying fall.
They deem him but some sorry wit
Serving the Holy Spirit's writ.

They know not souls can rust and rot,
  And deem him, while he says his say,
The tipsy watchman who forgot
  To call out "Carriage stops the way!"
They know not what it can portend,
This mocking cry, "Old souls to mend!"

While standing on the palace stone,
  He is in workhouse, brothel, jail;
He is to play and ballroom gone,
  To hear again the beauties rail;
With tender pity to behold
The dead alive in pearls and gold.

In meaning deep, in whispers low
  As bubble bursting on the air,
He lets the solemn warning flow
  Through jewelled ears of creatures fair,
Who, while they dance, their paces blend
With his mild words, "Old souls to mend!"

And when to church their sins they take,
  And bring them back to lunch again,
And fun of empty sermons make,
  He whispers softly in their train;
And sits with them if two or more
Think of a promise made of yore.

Of those who stay behind to sup,
  And in remembrance eat the bread,
He leads the conscience to the cup,
  His hands across the table spread.
When contrite hearts before him bend,
Glad are his words, "Old souls to mend!"

The little ones before the font
  He clasps within his arms to bless;
For childhood's pure and guileless front
  Smiles back his own sweet gentleness.
"Of such," he says, "my kingdom is,
For they betray not with a kiss."

He goes to hear the vicars preach:
  They do not always know his face,
Him they pretend the way to teach,
  And, as one absent, ask his grace.
Not then his words, "Old souls to mend!"
Their spirits pierce or bosoms rend.

He goes to see the priests revere
  His image as he lay in death:
They do not know that he is there;
  They do not feel his living breath,
Though to his secret they pretend
With incense sweet, old souls to mend.

He goes to hear the grand debate
  That makes his own religion law;
But him the members, as he sate
  Below the gangway, never saw.
They used his name to serve their end,
And others left old souls to mend.

Before the church-exchange he stands,
  Where those who buy and sell him, meet:
He sees his livings changing hands,
  And shakes the dust from off his feet.
Maybe his weary head he bows,
While from his side fresh ichor flows.

From mitred peers he turns his face.
  Where priests convoked in session plot,
He would remind them of his grace
  But for his now too humble lot;
So his dull cry on ears devout
He murmurs sadly from without.

He goes where judge the law defends,
  And takes the life he can't bestow,
And soul of sinner recommends
  To grace above, but not below;
Reserving for a fresh surprise
Whom it shall meet in Paradise.

He goes to meeting, where the saint
  Exempts himself from deadly ire,
But in a strain admired and quaint
  Consigns all others to the fire,
While of the damned he mocks the howl,
And on the tinker drops his scowl.

Digitized by Google

Go here, go there, they cite his word,
  While he himself is nigh forgot.
He hears them use the name of Lord,
  He present though they know him not.
Though he be there, they vision lack,
And talk of him behind his back.

Such is the Church and such the State.
  Both set him up and put him down—
Below the houses of debate,
  Above the jewels of the crown.
But when "Old souls to mend!" he says,
They send him off about his ways.

He is the humble, lowly one,
  In coat of rusty velveteen,
Who to his daily work has gone;
  In sleeves of lawn not ever seen.
No mitre on his forehead sticks:
His crown is thorny, and it pricks.

On it the dews of mercy shine;
  From heaven at dawn of day they fell;
And it he wears by right divine,
  Like earthly kings, if truth they tell;
And up to heaven the few to send,
He still cries out, "Old souls to mend!"

THOMAS GORDON HAKE (1809).

SUMMER LONGINGS.

AH! my heart is weary waiting—
  Waiting for the May—
  Waiting for the pleasant rambles,
  Where the fragrant hawthorn-brambles,
With the woodbine alternating,
  Scent the dewy way.
Ah! my heart is weary waiting—
  Waiting for the May.

Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
  Longing for the May—
  Longing to escape from study,
  To the young face fair and ruddy,
And the thousand charms belonging
  To the summer's day.
Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
  Longing for the May.

Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
  Sighing for the May—
  Sighing for their sure returning,
  When the summer beams are burning,
Hopes and flowers that, dead or dying,
  All the winter lay.
Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
  Sighing for the May.

Ah! my heart is pained with throbbing,
  Throbbing for the May—
  Throbbing for the sea-side billows,
  Or the water-wooing willows;
Where, in laughing and in sobbing,
  Glide the streams away.
Ah! my heart, my heart is throbbing,
  Throbbing for the May.

Waiting sad, dejected, weary,
  Waiting for the May:
  Spring goes by with wasted warnings—
  Moonlit evenings, sunbright mornings—
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary
  Life still ebbs away;
Man is ever weary, weary,
  Waiting for the May!

DENIS FLORENCE MAC-CARTHY (1810).

SPINNING-WHEEL SONG.

MELLOW the moonlight to shine is beginning;
Close by the window young Eileen is spinning;
Bent o'er the fire, her blind grandmother, sitting,
Is croaning, and moaning, and drowsily knitting—
"Eileen, achora, I hear some one tapping."
"'T is the ivy, dear mother, against the glass flapping."
"Eileen, I surely hear somebody sighing."
"'T is the sound, mother dear, of the summer wind dying."
Merrily, cheerily, noisily whirring,
Swings the wheel, spins the reel, while the foot's stirring;
Sprightly, and lightly, and arily ringing,
Thrills the sweet voice of the young maiden singing.

"What's that noise that I hear at the window, I wonder?"
"'T is the little birds chirping the holly-bush under."
"What makes you be shoving and moving your stool on,
And singing all wrong that old song of 'The Coolun!'"
There's a form at the casement—the form of her true-love—
And he whispers, with face bent, "I'm waiting for you, love;
Get up on the stool, through the lattice step lightly,
We'll rove in the grove while the moon's shining brightly."
Merrily, cheerily, noisily whirring,
Swings the wheel, spins the reel, while the foot's stirring;
Sprightly, and lightly and airily ringing,
Thrills the sweet voice of the young maiden singing,

The maid shakes her head, on her lip lays her fingers,
Steals up from her seat—longs to go and yet lingers;
A frightened glance turns to her drowsy grandmother,
Puts one foot on the stool, spins the wheel with the other.
Lazily, easily, swings now the wheel round;
Slowly and lowly is heard now the reel's sound;
Noiseless and light to the lattice above her
The maid steps—then leaps to the arms of her lover.

Digitized by Google

Slower — and slower — and slower the wheel swings;
Lower—and lower—and lower the reel rings;
Ere the reel and the wheel stop their ringing and moving,
Through the grove the young lovers by moonlight are roving.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER (1810).

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS.

LAST night among his fellow-roughs,
He jested, quaffed, and swore;
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before.
To-day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
Bewildered, and alone,
A heart, with English instinct fraught,
He yet can call his own.
Ay, tear his body limb from limb,
Bring cord or axe or flame,
He only knows that not through him
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,
Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleamed,
One sheet of living snow;
The smoke above his father's door
In gray soft eddyings hung;
Must he then watch it rise no more,
Doomed by himself so young?

Yes, honor calls!—with strength like steel
He put the vision by;
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel,
An English lad must die.
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
To his red grave he went.

Vain mightiest fleets of iron framed,
Vain those all-shattering guns,
Unless proud England keep untamed
The strong heart of her sons;
So let his name through Europe ring,—
A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,
Because his soul was great.

SIR FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE (1810).

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

IT was the calm and silent night!
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars,—
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain:
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars,
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

'T was in the calm and silent night!
The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly revel rolling home;
Triumphal arches, gleaming, swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What recked the Roman what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable-door
Across his path. He passed, for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars, his only thought—
The air how calm, and cold, and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

Oh, strange indifference! low and high
Drowsed over common joys and cares;
The earth was still, but knew not why;
The world was listening, unawares.
How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world forever!
To that still moment, none would heed,
Man's doom was linked no more to sever,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness, charmed and holy now!
The night that erst no name had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay, new-born,
The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

ALFRED DOMMETT (1811).

THE PAUPER'S DRIVE.

THERE 's a grim one-horse hearse in a jolly round trot—
To the churchyard a pauper is going, I wot;
The road it is rough, and the hearse has no springs;
And hark to the dirge which the mad driver sings:
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He 's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!

Oh, where are the mourners? Alas! there are none—
He has left not a gap in the world, now he 's gone—

Digitized by Google

Not a tear in the eye of child, woman, or man;
To the grave with his carcass as fast as you can:
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!

What a jolting, and creaking, and splashing, and din!
The whip how it cracks! and the wheels, how they spin!
How the dirt, right and left, o'er the hedges is hurled!
The pauper at length makes a noise in the world!
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!

Poor pauper defunct! he has made some approach
To gentility, now that he's stretched in a coach!
He's taking a drive in his carriage at last;
But it will not be long, if he goes on so fast.
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!

You bumpkins, who stare at your brother conveyed,
Behold what respect to a cloddy is paid!
And be joyful to think, when by death you're laid low,
You've a chance to the grave like a gemman to go!
Rattle his bones over the stones!
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!

But a truce to this strain; for my soul it is sad,
To think that a heart in humanity clad
Should make, like the brutes, such a desolate end,
And depart from the light without leaving a friend.
Bear soft his bones over the stones!
Though a pauper, he's one whom his Maker yet owns!

THOMAS NOEL (born about 1815).

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN PUNCH.]

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain;

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for *you?*

Yes: he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen;
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be:
How in good fortune and in ill, the same:
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work, such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark, that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear;
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it: four long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood:
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

Digitized by Google

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
  Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
  To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
  Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;
  Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

A deed accursed! Strokes have been struck before
  By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
  But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
  Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
  With much to praise, little to be forgiven.

TOM TAYLOR (1817).

IS IT COME?

Is it come? they said, on the banks of the Nile,
  Who looked for the world's long-promised day,
And saw but the strife of Egypt's toil,
  With the desert's sand and the granite gray.
From the Pyramid, temple, and treasured dead,
  We vainly ask for her wisdom's plan;
They tell us of the tyrant's dread—
  Yet there was hope when that day began.

The Chaldee came, with his starry lore,
  And built up Babylon's crown and creed;
And bricks were stamped on the Tigris shore
  With signs which our sages scarce can read.
From Ninus' temple, and Nimrod's tower,
  The rule of the old East's empire spread
Unreasoning faith and unquestioned power—
  But still, Is it come? the watcher said.

The light of the Persian's worshipped flame,
  The ancient bondage its splendor threw;
And once, on the West a sunrise came,
  When Greece to her freedom's trust was true;
With dreams to the utmost ages dear,
  With human gods, and with god-like men,
No marvel the far-off day seemed near,
  To eyes that looked through her laurels then.

The Romans conquered, and revelled too,
  Till honor, and faith, and power, were gone;
And deeper old Europe's darkness grew,
  As, wave after wave, the Goth came on.
The gown was learning, the sword was law;
  The people served in the oxen's stead;
But ever some gleam the watcher saw,
  And evermore, Is it come? they said.

Poet and seer that question caught,
  Above the din of life's fears and frets;
It marched with letters, it toiled with thought,
  Through schools and creeds which the earth forgets.
And statesmen trifle, and priests deceive,
  And traders barter our world away—
Yet hearts to that golden promise cleave,
  And still, at times, Is it come? they say.

The days of the nations bear no trace
  Of all the sunshine so far foretold;
The cannon speaks in the teacher's place—
  The age is weary with work and gold;
And high hopes wither, and memories wane;
  On hearths and altars the fires are dead;
But that brave faith hath not lived in vain—
  And this is all that our watcher said.

FRANCES BROWNE (1818).

LINES ON A SKELETON.

[THE manuscript of this poem was found near a human skeleton in the Royal College of Surgeons, London, and the verses were first published in the "Morning Chronicle." All attempts to discover the author, including an offer of a reward of fifty guineas, have proved unavailing.]

BEHOLD this ruin! 'T was a skull
Once of ethereal spirit full.
This narrow cell was Life's retreat,
This space was Thought's mysterious seat.
What beauteous visions filled this spot,
What dreams of pleasure long forgot,
Nor hope, nor joy, nor love, nor fear,
Have left one trace of record here.

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye,
But start not at the dismal void,—
If social love that eye employed,
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dews of kindness beamed,
That eye shall be forever bright
When stars and sun are sunk in night.

Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift, and tuneful tongue;
If Falsehood's honey it disdained,
And when it could not praise was chained;
If bold in Virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke,—
This silent tongue shall plead for thee
When Time unveils Eternity!

Say, did these fingers delve the mine?
Or with the envied rubies shine?
To hew the rock or wear a gem
Can little now avail to them.
But if the page of Truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourner brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that wait on Wealth and Fame.

Avails it whether bare or shod
These feet the paths of duty trod?
If from the bowers of Ease they fled,
To seek Affliction's humble shed;

Digitized by Google

If Grandeur's guilty bribe they spurned,
And home to Virtue's cot returned,—
These feet with angel-wings shall vie,
And tread the palace of the sky!

ANONYMOUS (1820).

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.

WHO fears to speak of Ninety-eight?
Who blushes at the name?
When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
Who hangs his head for shame?
He's all a knave, or half a slave,
Who slights his country thus;
But a true man, like you, man,
Will fill your glass with us.

We drink the memory of the brave,
The faithful and the few—
Some lie far off beyond the wave—
Some sleep in Ireland, too;
All, all are gone—but still lives on
The fame of those who died—
All true men, like you, men,
Remember them with pride.

Some on the shores of distant lands
Their weary hearts have laid,
And by the stranger's heedless hands
Their lonely graves were made;
But, though their clay be far away
Beyond the Atlantic foam—
In true men, like you, men,
Their spirit's still at home.

The dust of some is Irish earth;
Among their own they rest;
And the same land that gave them birth
Has caught them to her breast;
And we will pray that from their clay
Full many a race may start
Of true men, like you, men,
To act as brave a part.

They rose in dark and evil days
To right their native land;
They kindled here a living blaze
That nothing shall withstand.
Alas! that might can vanquish right—
They fell and passed away;
But true men, like you, men,
Are plenty here to-day.

Then here's their memory—may it be
For us a guiding light,
To cheer our strife for liberty,
And teach us to unite.
Through good and ill, be Ireland's still,
Though sad as theirs your fate;
And true men, be you, men,
Like those of Ninety-eight!

JOHN KELLS INGRAM (1820).

COLD IN EARTH.

COLD in earth, and the deep snow piled above thee!
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever evermore?

Cold in the earth, and fifteen wild Decembers
From those brown hills have melted into spring;
Faithful indeed is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering.

Sweet love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong.

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given;
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion,
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And even yet I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

EMILY BRONTÉ (1820–1848).

WHENCE AND WHITHER.

THE dawn went up the sky,
Like any other day;
And they had only come
To mourn Him where he lay,
"We ne'er have seen the law
Reversed 'neath which we lie;
Exceptions none are found,
And when we die, we die.
Resigned to fact we wander hither,
We ask no more the whence and whither.

"Vain questions! from the first
Put, and no answer found.

Digitized by Google

He binds us with the chain
Wherewith himself is bound.
From west to east the earth
Unrolls her primal curve;
The sun himself were vexed
Did he one furlong swerve:
The myriad years have whirled us hither,
But tell not of the whence and whither.

"We know but what we see—
Like cause and like event:
One constant force runs on
Transmuted, but unspent.
Because they are, they are;
The mind may frame a plan;
'T is from herself she draws
A special thought for man;
The natural choice that brought us hither,
Is silent on the whence and whither.

"If God there be, or Gods
Without our science lies;
We cannot see or touch,
Measure or analyze.
Life is but what we live,
We know but what we know,
Closed in these bounds alone
Whether God be, or no:
The self-moved force that bore us hither
Reveals no whence, and hints no whither.

"Ah, which is likelier truth,
That law should hold its way,
Or, for this one of all,
Life reassert her sway?
Like any other morn
The sun goes up the sky;
No crisis marks the day,
For when we die, we die.
No fair fond hope allures us hither:
The law is dumb on whence and whither."

—Then wherefore are ye come?
Why watch a worn-out corse?
Why weep a ripple past
Down the long stream of force?
If life is that which keeps
Each organism whole,
No atom may be traced
Of what he thought the soul:
It had its term of passage hither,
But knew no whence, and knows no whither.

The forces that were Christ
Have ta'en new forms and fled:
The common sun goes up,
The dead are with the dead.
'T was but a phantom-life
That seemed to think and will,
Evolving self and God
By some subjective skill;
That had its day of passage hither,
But knew no whence, and knows no whither.

If this be all in all;
Life but one mode of force;
Law but the plan which binds
The sequences in course:
All essence, all design
Shut out from mortal ken—
We bow to Nature's fate,
And drop the style of men!
The summer dust the wind wafts hither,
Is not more dead to whence and whither.

But if our life be life,
And thought, and will, and love
Not vague unconscious airs
That o'er wild harp-strings move;
If consciousness be aught
Of all it seems to be,
And souls are something more
Than lights that gleam and flee:
Though dark the road that leads us thither,
The heart must ask its whence and whither.

To matter or to force
The All is not confined;
Beside the law of things
Is set the law of mind;
One speaks in rock and star,
And one within the brain;
In unison at times,
And then apart again:
And both in one have brought us hither,
That we may know our whence and whither.

The sequences of law
We learn through mind alone;
'T is only through the soul
That aught we know is known:—
With equal voice she tells
Of what we touch and see
Within these bounds of life,
And of a life to be;
Proclaiming One who brought us hither,
And holds the keys of whence and whither.

O shrine of God that now
Must learn itself with awe!
O heart and soul that move
Beneath a living law!
That which seemed all the rule
Of Nature, is but part:
A larger, deeper law
Claims also soul and heart.
The force that framed and bore us hither
Itself—at once is whence and whither.

We may not hope to read
Or comprehend the whole
Or of the law of things,
Or of the law of soul:
E'en in the eternal stars
Dim perturbations rise;
And all the searcher's search
Does not exhaust the skies:
He who has framed and brought us hither
Holds in his hands the whence and whither.

He in his science plans
What no known laws foretell;
The wandering fires and fixed
Alike are miracle:
The common death of all,
The life renewed above,
And both within the scheme
Of that all-circling love.
The seeming chance that cast us hither,
Accomplishes his whence and whither.

Digitized by Google

Then, though the sun go up
His beaten azure way,
God may fulfil his thought,
And bless his world to-day;
Beside the law of things
The law of mind enthrone,
And, for the hope of all,
Reveal himself in one;
Himself the way that leads us thither,
The All-in-all, the Whence and Whither.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE (1824).

THE PLACE WHERE MAN SHOULD DIE.

How little recks it where men lie,
When once the moment 's past
In which the dim and glazing eye
Has looked on earth its last—
Whether beneath the sculptured urn
The coffined form shall rest,
Or in its nakedness return
Back to its Mother's breast.

Death is a common friend or foe,
As different men may hold;
And at his summons each must go,
The timid and the bold!
But when the spirit, free and warm,
Deserts it, as it must,
What matter where the lifeless form
Dissolves again to dust?

The soldier falls 'mid corses piled
Upon the battle-plain,
Where reinless war-steeds gallop wild
Above the mangled slain;
But, though his corse be grim to see,
Hoof-trampled on the sod,
What recks it, when the spirit free
Has soared aloft to God?

The coward's dying eyes may close
Upon his downy bed,
And softest hands his limbs compose,
Or garments o'er them spread!
But ye, who shun the bloody fray,
When fall the mangled brave,
Go—strip his coffin-lid away,
And see him in his grave!

'Twere sweet, indeed, to close our eyes,
With those we cherish near,
And, wafted upward by their sighs,
Soar to some calmer sphere.
But whether on the scaffold high,
Or in the battle's van,
The fittest place where man can die
Is where he dies for man!

MICHAEL JOSEPH BARRY (Dublin Nation, 1844).

DORIS.

I SAT with Doris, the shepherd maiden:
Her crook was laden with wreathèd flowers;
I sat and wooed her through sunlight wheeling,
And shadows stealing, for hours and hours.

And she, my Doris, whose lap encloses
Wild summer roses of rare perfume,
The while I sued her, kept hushed, and hearkened
Till shades had darkened from gloss to gloom.

She touched my shoulder with fearful finger;
She said: "We linger; we must not stay;
My flock 's in danger, my sheep will wander;
Behold them yonder—how far they stray!"

I answered bolder: "Nay, let me hear you,
And still be near you, and still adore;
No wolf nor stranger will touch one yearling;
Ah! stay, my darling, a moment more."

She whispered, sighing: "There will be sorrow
Beyond to-morrow, if I lose to-day;
My fold unguarded, my flock unfolded,
I shall be scolded, and sent away."

Said I, replying: "If they do miss you,
They ought to kiss you when you get home;
And well rewarded by friends and neighbor
Should be the labor from which you come."

"They might remember," she answered meekly,
"That lambs are weakly and sheep are wild;
But if they love me 't is none so fervent;
I am a servant, and not a child."

Then each hot ember glowed quick within me,
And love did win me to swift reply:
"Ah! do but prove me, and none shall blind you
Nor fray, nor find you, until I die."

She blushed and started, and stood awaiting,
As if debating in dreams divine;
But I did brave them—I told her plainly
She doubted vainly; she must be mine.

So we, twin-hearted, from all the valley
Did rouse and rally the nibbling ewes,
And homeward drave them, we two together,
Through blooming heather and gleaming dews.

That simple duty fresh grace did lend her—
My Doris tender, my Doris true:
That I, her warder, did always bless her,
And often press her to take her due.

And now in beauty she fills my dwelling—
With love excelling, and undefiled;
And love doth guard her, both fast and fervent,
No more a servant, nor yet a child.

ARTHUR MUNBY (born about 1830).

ARTEMUS WARD.

Is he gone to a land of no laughter,
The man that made mirth for us all?
Proves death but a silent hereafter
From the sounds that delight or appal?
Once closed, have the eyes no more duty,
No more pleasure the exquisite ears?
Has the heart done o'erflowing with beauty,
As the eyes have with tears?

Nay, if aught can be sure, what is surer
Than that earth's good decays not with earth?
And of all the heart-springs none are purer
Than the springs of the fountains of mirth.
He that sounds them has pierced the heart's [hollows,
The places where tears chose to sleep,
For the foam-flakes that dance in life's shallows
Are wrung from life's deep.

He came with a heart full of gladness,
From the glad-hearted world of the West,
Won our laughter, but not with mere madness,
Spake and joked with us, not in mere jest;
For the man in our hearts lingered after,
When the merriment died from our ears,
And those who were loudest in laughter
Are silent in tears.

ANONYMOUS (1867).

Digitized by Google

INDEX OF AUTHORS.

	VOL.	PAGE
Addison, Joseph	I.	286
Aird, Thomas	III.	753
Akenside, Mark	I.	528
Allingham, William	III.	605
Arnold, Matthew	III.	527
Aytoun, William E.	III.	468
Baillie, Joanna	II.	16
Ballantine, James	III.	285
Banim, John	III.	752
Barbauld, Anna L.	I.	662
Barham, Richard H.	II.	683
Barnes, William	III.	418
Barton, Bernard	II.	545
Bayly, Thomas H.	III.	46
Beattie, James	I.	652
Berkeley, George	III.	748
Blackie, John Stuart	III.	757
Blake, William	I.	711
Bloomfield, Robert	II.	58
Bonar, Horatius	III.	288
Bourne, Vincent	III.	748
Bowring, John	II.	733
Breton, Nicholas	I.	84
Brontë, Emily	III.	763
Browne, Frances	III.	762
Browning, Elizabeth B.	III.	221
Browning, Robert	III.	436
Buchanan, Robert	III.	728
Bulwer-Lytton, Robert	III.	668
Burns, Robert	I.	714
Byrd, William	III.	741
Byron, Lord	II.	593
Calverley, Charles S.	III.	660
Campbell, Thomas	II.	436
Canning, George	II.	152
Carew, Thomas	III.	744
Chatterton, Thomas	I.	669
Chaucer, Geoffrey	I.	1
Clare, John	II.	735
Clough, Arthur Hugh	III.	503
Coleridge, Hartley	III.	29
Coleridge, Samuel T.	II.	393
Collins, William	I.	550
Cook, Eliza	III.	501
Cowley, Abraham	I.	206
Cowper, William	I.	603
Crabbe, George	I.	676
Craik, Dinah M. M.	III.	576
Croly, George	II.	499
Cunningham, Allan	II.	549
Daniel, Samuel	I.	89
Davis, Thomas	III.	477
De Vere, Aubrey	III.	484
Dibdin, Charles	I.	664
Dimond, William	III.	753
Dobell, Sydney	III.	537
Dobson, Austin	III.	724
Dommett, Alfred	III.	760
Donne, John	III.	744
Doyle, Sir Francis H.	III.	760
Drayton, Michael	I.	91
Drummond, William	I.	97
Dryden, John	I.	218
Dyer, John	I.	435
Dufferin, Lady	III.	756
Elliott, Ebenezer	[illegible]	506
Faber, Frederick W.	[illegible]	488
Falconer, William	I.	578
Ferguson, Samuel	III.	496
Gay, John	I.	418
Gilbert, William S.	III.	706
Goldsmith, Oliver	I.	586
Grahame, James	II.	35
Grant, Sir Robert	II.	566
Gray, David	III.	717
Gray, Thomas	I.	514
Greenwell, Dora	III.	645
Griffin, Gerald	III.	214
Hake, Thomas G.	III.	759
Heber, Reginald	II.	508
Hemans, Felicia	II.	739
Herbert, George	I.	100
Herrick, Robert	III.	746
Hervey, Thomas K.	III.	167
Hogg, James	II.	153
Hood, Thomas	III.	56

Digitized by Google

	VOL.	PAGE
Howitt, William and Mary	III	218
Hunt, Leigh	II	547
Ingelow, Jean	III	611
Ingram, John K.	III	763
Johnson, Samuel	I	500
Jonson, Ben	I	98
Jones, Sir William	I	667
Keats, John	III	1
Keble, John	II	702
King, Henry	III	745
Kingsley, Charles	III	515
Knox, Isa Craig	III	710
Knox, William	II	692
Lamb, Charles	II	402
Landon, Letitia E.	III	205
Landor, Walter S.	II	382
Leyden, John	II	410
Locker, Frederick	III	551
Logan, John	III	750
Lovelace, Richard	III	747
Lover, Samuel	III	30
Macaulay, Thomas B.	III	172
Mac-Carthy, Denis F.	III	759
Mackay, Charles	III	463
Mangan, James C.	III	754
Massey, Gerald	III	586
Mickle, William J.	III	749
Milliken, Richard A.	III	751
Milman, Henry H.	II	694
Milnes, Richard M.	III	290
Milton, John	I	108
Moir, David M.	III	52
Montgomery, James	II	297
Moore, Thomas	II	473
Morris, Charles	III	750
Morris, William	III	692
Motherwell, William	III	37
Moultrie, John	III	755
Munby, Arthur	III	765
Nairne, Lady	II	51
Noel, Thomas	III	761
Norton, Caroline	III	260
O'Shaughnessy, Arthur	III	738
Outram, George	III	756
Palgrave, Francis T.	III	765
Parnell, Thomas	I	295
Payne, John	III	734
Pollok, Robert	III	95
Pope, Alexander	I	373
Praed, Winthrop M.	III	193
Prior, Matthew	I	263
Procter, Adelaide A.	III	562
Procter, Bryan W.	II	568
Quarles, Francis	III	746
Raleigh, Sir Walter	III	742
Ramsay, Allan	III	748
Rogers, Samuel	II	1
Rossetti, Christina G.	III	647
Rossetti, Dante G.	III	595
Scott, Sir Walter	II	161
Sedley, Sir Charles	III	748
Shakespeare, William	I	62
Shelley, Percy B.	II	708
Shenstone, William	I	507
Shirley, James	III	746
Sidney, Sir Philip	III	742
Smith, Alexander	III	651
Smith, James and Horace	II	412
Smollett, Tobias	I	525
Southey, Caroline B.	III	752
Southey, Robert	II	359
Spencer, Robert W.	III	751
Spenser, Edmund	I	10
Sterling, John	III	257
Suckling, Sir John	III	747
Swain, Charles	III	211
Swift, Jonathan	I	272
Swinburne, Algernon C.	III	712
Tannahill, Robert	II	356
Taylor, Tom	III	762
Tennant, William	II	510
Tennyson, Alfred	III	292
Thackeray, William M.	III	432
Thomson, James	I	441
Thornbury, Walter	III	584
Vaughan, Henry	III	747
Waller, Edmund	I	108
Waller, John F.	III	760
Walton, Izaak	III	746
Waring, Anna L.	III	639
Warton, Joseph and Thomas	I	559
Wastel, Simon	III	[illegible]
Watts, Isaac	I	293
Wesley, Charles	I	498
White, Henry K.	II	553
White, J. Blanco	III	751
Wilson, John	II	563
Wither, George	III	744
Wolfe, Charles	II	700
Wordsworth, William	II	71
Wotton, Sir Henry	III	743
Young, Edward	I	298
Anonymous	III	743, 751, 763, 765

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA—BERKELEY

RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

25Feb'55DW

JUN 1 6 1955 LU

20 May'62KB

REC'D LD
MAY 6 1962

LD 21-100m-1,'54(1887s16)476

Digitized by Google

YD 26590

M94402

918
J667
v.3

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google